

11-7-10
A
DISSERTATION
ON THE
ECLIPSE

MENTIONED BY

PHLEGON

OR, AN

ENQUIRY

WHETHER THAT

ECLIPSE

HAD

Any RELATION to the DARK-
NESS which happened at our
SAVIOUR'S PASSION.

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INTRODUCTION.



THE late learned Dr. *S. Clarke* having begun a little before his death to revise and correct his Sermons, preached at the Honourable Mr. *Boyle's* Lecture, against a New Edition should be wanted;--amongst some other things which on that occasion I suggested to him, I told him my Apprehension that the *Eclipse* mentioned by *Phlegon* had no relation to the darkness at our Saviour's passion; nor ought it to be cited for the purpose, for which He, (as *Grotius* and others before him) had cited it. The Reasons I then gave him were such as made him strike out that passage: And since his Book now appears *without that Citation or Testimony*, I think my self obliged to lay before the world, what it was that first induced me, and afterwards Dr. *Clarke*, to

think, that *Pblegon's* Eclipse was not the same with that preternatural darkness at the death of Christ.

I think my self the more obliged to this, because Mr. *Whiston* in his *Historical Memoirs of Dr. Clarke, &c.* p. 148. has in so remarkable a manner mentioned this affair. A Book! wherein that man of warmth, and zeal, and indiscretion, has taken a matchless liberty to misrepresent and abuse my self as well as others; to pass hard censures upon some facts which he knew not the true grounds of; and to relate some direct falsehoods, without consulting, or regarding, the only persons that could have set him right.

There may be possibly some men, who may think, or pretend to think, that such an *Enquiry* as this may do some harm at a time when Christianity is so openly attacked; since it weakens at least, if not entirely sets aside a testimony, which often has been urged by men of name in the learned world in its behalf. But for my part I can't help thinking, that 'tis doing a real service to the cause of Christ, to guard against such testimonies as cannot possibly be *proved* to relate to it. Christianity never

ver gained ground by such sort of evidence; nor ever will. The chief strength of a just vindication of Christianity lies in the arguments which may be urged from Prophecy in the Old and New Testament, and in the evidence that can be produced for the miracles done by Jesus and his Apostles; in shewing, that nothing in it is unworthy of God to reveal, or unworthy of a rational agent to receive; that it contains all proper motives to encourage virtue; and that the person who came and laid these motives before the world was actually sent from God. When these points are proved, (and sure I am that it cannot be objected to *me* that I have not * endeavoured to prove them.) When these points I say are proved---- the addition of *very disputable*, if not totally *impertinent*, testimonies, does but *weaken* the evidence; it never can possibly *add* any force to what is urged for the truth of Christianity.

* V. My Essay on the *Truth of the Christian Religion*.

The true Grounds of the Expectation of the *Messiah*.

The true Foundations of *Natural and Revealed Religion* asserted.

A Defence of the Answer to the Remarks upon Dr. Clarke's *Exposition of the Church Catechism*. In the *Appendix* to which is shewn, the proper method of proceeding in the argument against serious Infidels, and how Christianity may be proved to them.

How-

However, whether I am mistaken in my sentiments, or in any remarks I have made upon this passage, or not, I have here collected, and faithfully represented to the reader, the principal, if not all the passages which relate to *Phlegon's* testimony, amongst the ancients. Mr. *Whiston* has already received great advantages from my *mistake* (if it be a mistake,) because “*it has been one occasion of some of the noblest and most important discoveries that he ever made in Astronomy and Chronology;*” and for the truth of this he “*appeals to the Auditors of his late Astronomical Lectures.*” *Whiston's Memoirs*, p. 149. Now, when the reasons upon which I made my Judgment appear, I shall be glad to see him, or any one else, make greater advantages still from them: and I shall not be sorry to find my self confuted, because I shall then have this additional *Testimony* unquestionable, which at present I do not conceive to have any relation to the Passion of our Saviour.



A
DISSERTATION
ON THE
ECLIPSE, &c.



WHEN our Saviour hung up-
on the cross, Three of the
Evangelists give us an ac-
count of a very peculiar
and extraordinary darkness
which then happened. St.
Matthew's words are, ch. xxvii. 45. *Now*
from the sixth Hour there was darkness
a over all the land unto the ninth hour.

^a ἐπὶ πάντων τῆς γῆς.

St.

St. Mark, c. xv. 33, says, *When the sixth hour was come there was darkness^b over the whole land until the ninth hour.* St. Luke, c. xxiii. 44, 45, says, *And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the^c earth ('tis the same word in the original that is used by Matthew and Mark, and is in their Gospels translated, Land,) until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened.*

Whatever this darkness was, and from what cause soever it proceeded, 'tis certain that it could not proceed from any natural eclipse of the Sun; not only because this fact happened at the *Passover*, i. e. at, or about the full moon, when there can be no solar eclipse; but likewise because this darkness continued nigh, if not full, three hours; whereas the longest solar eclipse possible cannot produce any very great darkness much above twice three minutes. None of the Evangelists ever call this darkness, an eclipse: and therefore these words ought not to be confounded. *Origen* observes, that there had been some tampering with

^b ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν

^c γῆν.

St. *Luke's* gospel, ^d and that " instead of
 " those words--- *The sun was darkened*---
 " some copies had it-- *the sun being eclipsed*".
 But he judged, that this corruption proceeded
 " from some artful enemies of the
 " church that had a mind to refute what
 " the Gospels had asserted", rather than from
 any weak or ignorant christian, who falsely
 imagined that to proceed from an *eclipse*,
 which plainly arose from some other
 cause.

But be this as it will : It has all along
 been the subject of enquiry, --- whence is it,
 that no one has ever mentioned this ex-
 traordinary darkness *all over the world*, ex-
 cept only *Christian* writers ? Whence is it,
 that no *Greek*, no *Latin*, no *Jewish* writer
 should take any notice of so extraordinary
 an event ? Whence can it be that no *His-*
torian of any nation whatever, should men-
 tion so remarkable a fact as this ? In an-

^d In quibusdam exemplaribus non habetur, *Tenebra facta sunt et obscuratus est sol* ; sed ita ; *Tenebra facta sunt super omnem terram sole deficiente*. Et forsitan ausus est aliquis, quasi manifestius aliquid dicere volens, pro, *et obscuratus est sol*, povere, *deficiente sole* ; existimans quod non aliter potuissent fieri tenebrae nisi sole deficiente. Puto autem magis quod *insidiatores Ecclesiae* mutaverunt hoc verbum, quoniam tenebrae factae sunt sole deficiente, ut verisimiliter Evangelia argui possint secundum adinventiones volentium arguere ista. Orig. Tract. 35 in Matt.

swer to this, the Authority of *Pblegon* is quoted; and we have these words given us as his by *Eusebius* in his *Chronicon*.

Τῷ δ' ἔτει τῆς σβ' ὀλυμπιάδῃ ἐγένετο ἑκλειψις ἡλίου μεγίστη τῶν ἐγνωρισμένων πρότερον· καὶ νύξ ὥρα γ' τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥστε καὶ ἀστέρας ἐν ἑρανῶ φανῆναι· σεισμός τε μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν γινόμενος, τὰ πολλὰ Νικαίας κατεστρέφατο.
i. e. *In the fourth year of the 202^d Olympiad there was an Eclipse of the Sun, the greatest of any known before that time. 'Twas [as dark as] night at the sixth hour of the day, so as that the stars appeared in heaven. And a great earthquake in Bithynia overturned a great many houses of the city of Nice.*

'Tis added likewise that *Thallus* mentioned this *Eclipse*: but as none of his words are extant, we can know no more of his testimony, than what is contained in the passage of *Africanus* which will be produced and considered presently.

Two things then are to be considered. *First*, Whether there be sufficient reason to believe that *Pblegon's* own words were, τῷ δ' ἔτει, in the *Fourth* year of the 202^d Olympiad. For 'tis evident, that our Saviour dying in the *Fourth* year of the 202^d Olympiad, if *Pblegon* did not speak of a fact that hap-

happened in the *Fourth* year of that Olympiad, but of one that happened in the *First* year, then he could not bear testimony to the darkness at our Saviour's passion.

Secondly, It must be considered, whether *Phlegon* did not mean by his words a *real natural Eclipse*. For if he did, then likewise it follows, that he could not speak of what happened at the death of Christ.

In order therefore to form a judgment of this matter, I shall examine this passage as it stands quoted, or is alluded to, by the writers of the first six centuries after Christ, that we may see if from any marks we can be sure, what the true reading of *Phlegon* is; and whether it related to the darkness at our Saviour's death.

PHLEGON himself was the Emperour *Adrian's* Freedman; and therefore he lived much about a hundred years after the death of Christ.

JULIUS AFRICANUS is the first that mentions *Phlegon*, and applies what he has said about this eclipse and earthquake, to that darkness and earthquake that happened at our Saviour's passion. He lived about 86 years after *Phlegon*. Speaking of our

Saviour, and his death, and what happened at it, he has these words :

“ His actions, his cures both of bodies
 “ and souls, his knowledge of secrets, and
 “ his resurrection from the dead, were suf-
 “ ficiently made manifest to his Apostles, and
 “ his Disciples who lived before our times.
 “ There was a most dreadful darkness *all*
 “ *over the world*. The rocks were rent by
 “ an earthquake, and many places in *Judæa*,
 “ and in the *other parts* of the earth were
 “ thrown down. This darkness *Thallus* in
 “ the 3d Book of his History, calls an *eclipse*
 “ of the sun: *absurdly*, as I think. For the

• Τὸ δὲ καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν πράξεων αὐτοῦ, καὶ θεραπειῶν σωμάτων καὶ ψυχῶν, καὶ τῶν τῆς γνώσεως ἀποκρύφων ἀνασείσωσθε τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν, αὐταρχεῖσθαι τοῖς πρὸ ἡμῶν μαθηταῖς τε καὶ ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ δηλῶσαι. Καθολὸν τὸ κόσμος σκότῃ ἐπείγετο φοβερώτατον. Σεισμῶν δὲ αἰπέτραι διεργάγγυντο, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς γῆς κατερρίφη. Τῷτο τὸ σκότῃ ἐκλείψιν τῆς ἡλίου θάλλῃ ἀποκαλεῖ ἐν τρίτῃ τῶν ἱστορίων ὡς ἡμεῖς δοκεῖ, ἀλόγως. Ἑβραῖοι γὰρ ἄγασσι τὸ πάχος κατὰ σελήνην ἰδ', πρὸ δὲ μιᾶς τῆς πάχους τὰ περὶ τὸν Σωτῆρα συμβάνει. Ἑκλείψις δὲ ἡλίου σελήνης ὑπελθούσης τὸν ἥλιον γίνεται. Ἀδύνατον δὲ ἐν ἄλλῳ χρόνῳ, πλην ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ μιᾶς καὶ τῆς πρὸ αὐτῆς κατὰ τὴν σύνθεσιν αὐτὴν ἀποβῆναι. Πῶς ἔν ἐκλείψει νομιθεῖν κατὰ διάμετρον χεῖρον ὑπαρχέσης τῆς σελήνης ἡλίου; Ἐγὼ δὲ συναρπάζω, τὸς πολλὰς τὸ γεγεννημένον, καὶ τὸ κοσμικὸν τέρας ἡλίου ἐκλείψις υπονοεῖσθαι ἐν τῇ κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν φλεγῶν ἱστορίᾳ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐν ΠΑΝΣΕΛΗΝΩ ἐκλείψιν ἡλίου γεγονέναι τελείαν ἀπὸ ὥρας ἑκτῆς μέχρις ἑννάτης. Δῆλον ὡς ταύτην. Τίς δὲ ἡ κοινανία σείσμων καὶ ἐκλείψει, πέτραις ρηγνυμέναις καὶ ἀνασείσει νεκρῶν, τοσαύτη τε κινήσει κοσμικῇ; ἐν γὰρ τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ τοῦτο τι συμβῆναι μνημονεύεται. Ἀλλ' ἢ σκοτος διοποιήτων, ὅστις τὸν κύριον συνέβη παθεῖν.

“ *Hebreus*

“ *Hebrews* celebrate the Passover on the 14th
 “ day of the moon : and the things which
 “ happened to our Saviour, happened on [or
 “ just before] the first day of the Paschal so-
 “ lemnity : Now an eclipse of the sun is
 “ caused by the moon’s interposition betwixt
 “ the earth and the sun : But this is im-
 “ possible to happen at any other time, ex-
 “ cept at the conjunction, just at the time
 “ betwixt the old and the new moon. How
 “ then can it be thought to be an eclipse,
 “ when the moon was almost in direct op-
 “ position to the sun ? But be it so. Let the
 “ multitude rest satisfied with the truth of
 “ what actually happened; and let this univer-
 “ sal prodigy be supposed to be the same as an
 “ eclipse of the sun, since in respect of our
 “ Sight ’twas all one. *Phlegon* tells us, that in
 “ *Tiberius Cæsar’s* reign, at the time of the
 “ FULL MOON there was a total eclipse
 “ of the sun from the sixth hour to the
 “ ninth. ’Tis plain he speaks of this. But
 “ what relation have these things one to an-
 “ other, an earthquake, and an eclipse ;
 “ rocks rent, and a resurrection from the
 “ dead, and such a general commotion in the
 “ world ? ’Tis certain that nothing like this
 “ is ever mentioned to have happened. But
 “ this

“ this darkness was from God, because the
“ Lord then suffered.”

George the Monk, commonly called *Syncellus* has preserved this fragment, *p.* 322 : and 'tis remarkable on several accounts. As,

1st, He says expressly, that *Pblegon* tells us, that “ in the reign of *Tiberius Cæsar* “ there was a total eclipse of the sun at the “ FULL MOON”. Now the passage in *Pblegon* it self being preserved, it is evident that *Pblegon* says *not one word* about its being *at the full moon*. Nay it will appear to be expressly denied in *Origen*, that ever *Pblegon* did say so.

2^{dly}, *Africanus* finds fault with *Thallus* for calling the darkness which happened at the death of Christ, “ an eclipse of the sun” : And yet in this very fragment he cites *Pblegon*, without any censure at all, as calling it an *eclipse of the sun*, and as adding, what *Africanus* knew to be an “ *absurdity*”, that it was *at the full Moon*. How comes it to pass that *Thallus* is censured for an *absurdity*, and yet *Pblegon* who was guilty of a much *greater absurdity*, escapes uncensured? *Africanus* truly was very willing to have *Pblegon's* eclipse *supposed* to be the same with the darkness which happened at the death of Christ,

Christ, since "in respect of our Sight, 'twas
 "all one": i. e. one darkness is the same as another; the darkness of an eclipse of the sun, and the darkness proceeding from a great fog, or from any cause whatever, causing us not to see, you may call any of these darkneses an eclipse of the sun.

3dly, *Africanus* says, that there "was a
 "most dreadful darkness *all over the world*.
 "Rocks were rent asunder by an Earth-
 "quake, and many places in *Judæa*, and
 "in *other parts of the earth* were thrown
 "down". This is another mistake in our
 Author; for as we shall see presently in *Ori-*
gen, there was no such darkness, no such
 havock made, no rocks rent any where but
 in *Judæa*. But

4thly, The principal point is, How *Afri-*
canus knew that *Pblegon's* testimony related
 to the particular time of Christ's death: He
 cites no more from *Pblegon* than this, "That
 "in *Tiberius Cæsar's* reign there was a total
 "eclipse of the sun from the sixth to the
 "ninth hour". But in what particular *year*
 of *Tiberius's* reign, this eclipse happened,
Africanus has not said. However, though
Africanus has not named the year, yet by his
 application of the eclipse of *Pblegon* to the
 death

death of Christ, 'tis plain he supposed it to be the same year. If therefore it can be found out what year was the universally allowed year amongst the Antients of our Saviour's death, and what was *Africanus's* notion in particular, That must be the year in which *Pblegon's* eclipse happened.

To begin then with *Clemens Alexandrinus* : he observes that Christ was thirty years old, when he came to his baptism^f ; “ and “ that he *ought* not to preach above *one* “ year, for 'tis written thus— He sent me “ to preach *the acceptable year* of the Lord. “ By *fifteen* years then in *Tiberius's* reign, and “ *fifteen* in *Augustus's*, *Thirty* years are “ made up, in which year he suffered”. Again ; “ They that have examined more “ carefully into the time of our Lord's pas- “ sion, say, some that he suffered in the “ *sixteenth* year of *Tiberius*, on the 25th of “ the month *Phamenoth* : Others say on the “ 25th of *Pharmuthi* : Others say that he “ suffered on the 19th of *Pharmuthi*”.

^f “Οτι ἐνιαυτὸν μόνον ἶδεν αὐτὸν κηρύττειν, καὶ τὸτο γέγραπται ὅτι· “Ενιαυτὸν δευτέρου κυρίου κηρύττειν ἀπέστειλεν με— Πεντεκαιδέκατῳ ἐν ἔτει Τιβερίου καὶ πεντεκαιδέκατῳ Αὐγούστου· ἔτι πληρῶνται τὰ τριάκοντα ἔτη ἕως ἡμετέρας. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. i. p. 407, 408.

ε Τὸ δὲ πάθος αὐτοῦ ἀκριβολογούμενοι φέρουσιν, οἱ μὲν τινες τῷ ἐκ- καιδέκατῳ ἔτει Τιβερίου Καίσαρος, Φαμενόθ καὶ. Οἱ δὲ Φαρμουθὶ καὶ, ἄλλοι δὲ Φαρμουθὶ ἡ πεπονθέναι τὸν Σωτῆρα λέγουσιν· ibid.

Origen

Origen says that our Saviour ^h “ preached
“ but *one year* and a few months ”.

Tertullian says ⁱ that “ Christ suffered in
“ the 15th of *Tiberius*, being about thirty
“ years old when he suffered ”.

Lactantius has it thus ^k “ In the 15th of
“ *Tiberius*, the two *Gemini* being Consuls
“ on the 7th of the Calends of *April*, the
“ *Jews* crucified Christ ”.

This was then in general the old notion,
viz. that our Saviour preached but *one year* ;
and in this 'tis certain that *Africanus* was.
For *Jerom* has preserved a passage of
our author, wherein he expressly asserts
^l that our Saviour died in the 15th of *Tibe-*
rius. If therefore *Phlegon's* eclipse was the
same *time of the year* that *Africanus* con-
ceived the death of Christ to be, 'tis evident
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^h Ἐναυτὸν γὰρ πρὸς τὴν μὴν ὀλίγας ἐδίδαξεν. Origen. Philocal.
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ⁱ Hujus [Tiberii] quinto decimo anno imperii passus est
Christus, annos habens quasi *triginta* quum pateretur. Tertul.
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^k Cujus [Tiberii] anno quinto decimo, id est, duobus Ge-
minis, Cons. ante diem septimam Calendarum Aprilium Judæi
Christum cruci affixerunt. Lact. l. 4. c. 10.

^l Ad annum quintum decimum Tiberii Caesaris, quando
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^l Ad annum quintum decimum Tiberii Cæsaris, quando
passus est Christus. Africanus apud Hieronymum in Daniel.
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been not in the 4th year of the 202^d Olympiad, but in the 4th year of the 201st. 'Tis absurd therefore for *Eusebius* and *Jerom*, who fix'd the death of Christ to the 3^d or 4th year of the 202^d Olympiad, to quote *Phlegon's* testimony for it, when the difference betwixt them and *Africanus* was plainly *three* or four years: And if *Africanus* was right in citing *Phlegon's* authority, then from the supposed time of Christ's death the true Reading of *Phlegon* must be the *Fourth* year of the 201st not of the 202^d Olympiad. In this year we shall find by computation, that there really was a total eclipse; though the Olympiadic year beginning in *July* the eclipse of *Phlegon* happened properly in the first year of the 202^d Olympiad: and this will help us to determine the true reading of *Phlegon* as will appear hereafter.

Africanus then has been guilty of several mistakes in relating this fact, asserting that of *Phlegon*, which *Phlegon* never said; and giving us false facts, when he says the darkness was *all over the world*, and the *Earthquake* made destruction in *other parts* of the Earth besides *Judæa*. However this we must remember, that he fixes by direct consequence *Phlegon's* eclipse to that *Julian* year

year which contained part of the *Fourth* year of the 201st Olympiad ; and part of the *First* year of the 202^d Olympiad, for in that year he supposed Christ to have died.

Origen is the next who mentions this affair of *Pblegon*. He was cotemporary with *Africanus*, and particularly intimate with him : And 'tis from *Origen's* account of the meaning of those words of St. *Matthew* --- *There was darkness over all the land*--- that we are enabled to confute the mistakes of *Africanus*. 'Tis somewhat long, but yet it must be transcribed on this occasion.

^m He begins with observing, that 'twas an objection of some who were enemies to the Gospel that ⁿ “no history gives us any “account” of this extraordinary darkness ; and he makes them reason very truly that this could not arise from any natural eclipse. “The Believers, saith he, ^o pressed with “the objections of such men,” replied, “^p that all the other prodigies which then “happened being new and wonderful, 'tis

^m *Origen. 35^{mus} Tractatus in Matt.*

ⁿ *Quod factum nulla refert Historia. ibid.*

^o *Angustiati sermonibus poenitentium talia. ibid.*

^p *Nova et admiranda ; manifestum est quoniam et illa defectio solis consequenter secundum cætera prodigia nova contra consuetudinem facta est. ibid.*

“ plain that that eclipse of the Sun like-
 “ wise, like all the other prodigies, must
 “ be new and preternatural.”

In answer to this reasoning of Believers,
 he says, the children of this world reply--
 “ ¶ Suppose that that eclipse of the Sun was
 “ preternatural, not long ago, under the
 “ *Roman* Empire, so as that that darkness
 “ was over all the Earth to the ninth hour,
 “ how comes it to pass that *no one of the*
 “ *Greeks, no one of any other nation, ever*
 “ *took notice* of this so extraordinary an
 “ event in their writings, who lived at the
 “ time when this happened: particularly
 “ how happens it that *none of those* men-
 “ tion it who have wrote CHRONICLES,
 “ and *have observed*, if any where any *new*
 “ thing has at any time happened. How
 “ is it, that only *your Writers* (i. e. Chri-
 “ stians) have taken notice of it. *Phlegon*
 “ indeed has given us some account in his

¶ Pone quia extra consuetudinem facta est illa defectio solis in tempore non antiquo, sub principatu Romanorum, ita ut tenebræ fierent super omnem terram usque ad horam nonam; quomodo hoc factum tam mirabile nemo Græcorum, nemo Barbarorum factum conscripsit in tempore illo; maxime qui Chronica conscripserunt, & notaverunt sicubi tale aliquid novum factum est aliquando; sed soli hoc scripserunt vestri autores? Et Phlegon quidem in Chronicis suis scripsit, in principatu Tiberii Cæsaris factum, sed non significavit in luna plena hoc factum. ibid.

“ *Chronicles*,

“ *Chronicles*, of an eclipse that was in the
 “ reign of *Tiberius Cæsar*, but he never in-
 “ timated that this was at *the full moon*.

This objection *Origen* thought to be so
 strong, that it “^r might shake even a *wise*
 “ man, who determined things by *reason*,
 “ and not by *faith*”. In order therefore
 to remove it, and to confirm believers in
 the faith, he begins with observing “^s That
 “ *Matthew* and *Mark* did not say, that then
 “ there

^r Potentem movere omnem hominem sapientem, qui omnia
 non ex fide sed ex ratione dijudicat. *ibid*.

^s Quod *Matthæus* & *Marcus* non dixerunt defectionem so-
 lis tunc factam fuisse; sed neq; *Lucas* secundum pleraq; exem-
 plaria habentia sic: Et erat hora fere sexta, & tenebræ factæ
 sunt super omnem terram usq; ad horam nonam, & obscura-
 tus est sol. In quibusdam autem Exemplaribus non habetur,
 Tenebræ factæ sunt & obscuratus est sol; sed ita; Tenebræ
 factæ sunt super omnem terram sole deficiente. Et forsitan
 ausus est aliquis, quasi manifestius aliquid dicere volens, pro, &
 obscuratus est sol, ponere, deficiente sole; existimans quod
 non aliter potuissent fieri tenebræ nisi sole deficiente. Puto
 autem magis quod Insidiatōres Ecclesiæ Christi mutaverunt hoc
 verbum, quoniam tenebræ factæ sunt sole deficiente, ut verifi-
 militer Evangelia argui possint secundum adinventiones volen-
 tium arguere ista. Arbitror ergo: sicut cætera signa quæ facta
 sunt in passione ipsius, in Hierusalem tantummodo facta sunt;
 sic et tenebræ tantummodo super omnem terram Judæam sunt
 factæ usque ad horam nonam. Quæ autem dico in Hierusalem
 tantummodo hæc facta sunt, quod velum templi scissum est,
 quod terra contremuit, quod petreæ diruptæ sunt, quod monu-
 menta aperta sunt. Nec enim extra Judæam petreæ diruptæ
 sunt, aut monumenta aperta sunt alia, nisi ea tantum quæ in
 Hierusalem erant, aut forte in terra Judæa. Nec alia terra tre-
 muit tunc nisi terra Hierusalem: Nec enim refertur alicubi
 quod omne elementum terræ tremuerit in tempore illo, ut
 sentirent, v. g. et qui in Ethiopia erant, et in India, & in Scy-
 thia

“ there was an *Eclipse* ; no nor *Luke*, ac-
 “ cording to most copies, which have it
 “ thus--- *And it was almost the sixth hour,*
 “ *and there was darkness over all the earth*
 “ *to the ninth hour, and the Sun was dark-*
 “ *ned.* But then in some copies 'tis not---
 “ *There was darkness and the Sun was*
 “ *darkned*--- But 'tis thus--- *There was dark-*
 “ *ness over all the earth the Sun being e-*
 “ *clipsed.* Perhaps some body having a
 “ mind to express himself more determi-
 “ nately, or intelligibly, instead of--- *the*
 “ *Sun was darkned*--- put-- *the Sun was e-*
 “ *clipsed*,--imagining that that darkness could
 “ not otherwise be, unless by the Sun's be-
 “ ing eclipsed. But I am rather of opi-
 “ nion, that some who had an ill design a-
 “ gainst the Church of Christ had changed
 “ the expression of the Gospel into this---
 “ *that darkness arose by an eclipse of the Sun,*

thia: quod si factum fuisset sine dubio inveniretur in historiis
 aliquibus eorum qui in Chronicis scripserunt nova aliqua facta.
 Sicut ergo quod dicitur; terra contremuit; refertur ad ter-
 ram Jerusalem, aut si latius voluerit quis extendere ad terram
 Judæam; sic et tenebræ factæ sunt ab hora sexta usque ad
 nonam super omnem terram, intellige quod super omnem ter-
 ram Judæam sunt factæ, aut certe super Hierusalem tantum.
 Sic ergo qui intelligit, sine culpa intelligit; & non magnitudi-
 nem miraculi ostendere vult incidat in risum sapientium se-
 culi hujus, & magis Infidelitatem in hominibus sapientibus ope-
 retur quam fidem. ibid.

“ that

“ that the Gospels might be liable to be
 “ attacked, according to the designs of those
 “ who were disposed to attack them.

“ ’Tis my opinion therefore ; as the *other*
 “ signs which happened at his passion, were
 “ *only* done in *Jerusalem*, so likewise that
 “ darkness was *only over all the land of*
 “ *Judæa* to the ninth hour. As to the
 “ particulars which I say were done *only*
 “ in *Jerusalem*, they are these---*The veil*
 “ *of the temple was rent, the earth quaked, the*
 “ *rocks were rent, the monuments were open-*
 “ *ed*: For *out of Judæa*, the rocks were not
 “ *rent*, nor were any *monuments opened*, un-
 “ less those that were in *Jerusalem*, or at
 “ most in the land of *Judæa* : nor was
 “ there *any earthquake elsewhere*, unless
 “ that which was at *Jerusalem* : for we
 “ have *no account, any where*, that the
 “ whole earth was shook at that time, *e. g.*
 “ so that those who were in *Ethiopia*, and
 “ those that were in *India*, and in *Scythia*
 “ felt it. Which if it had happened, with-
 “ out doubt it would be found in some of
 “ their accounts of things, who have related
 “ *new* [extraordinary] facts in their *Chro-*
 “ *nicles*. As therefore when ’tis said, the
 “ *earth quaked*, this relates to the earth at
 “ *Jeru-*

" *Jerusalem*; or if any one would extend
 " it further, to the land of *Judæa*; so like-
 " wise when 'tis said, *there was darkness*
 " *from the sixth hour to the ninth* over all
 " the land, understand, *that it was over all*
 " the land of *Judæa*; or upon *Jerusalem*
 " alone. He that understands this *thus*, is
 " not to blame for understanding it so:
 " And will not expose himself to the laugh-
 " ter of the wise men of this world, and
 " cause infidelity rather than faith in wise
 " men, as he must do, that is desirous to
 " magnify this miracle beyond what is
 " true."

After this preliminary introduction he
 endeavours to account for this phenomenon,
 by shewing that this darkness arose from
 " certain *thick clouds* which obstructed the
 " rays of the sun" from that " particu-
 " lar spot of ground.

Thus far *Origen* in his 35th Discourse
 upon *Matthew*. He has likewise twice re-
 ferr'd to this testimony of *Phlegon* in his
 books against *Celsus*, which I shall here
 transcribe that we may have the whole of
Origen together, before I make any re-
 marks upon what he says.

His

His first is p. 80. "As to the *eclipse*
 " which happened in *Tiberius Cæsar's* reign,
 " in whose time Jesus was crucified, and
 " concerning the great earthquakes, *Pblegon*
 " wrote, I think, in the 13th book of his
 " *Chronicles*".

The other passage is, in answer to *Celsus*
 who looked upon the earthquake and the
 darkness mentioned in the gospel as " fic-
 " titious prodigies", He says, ^x " we have
 " vindicated them as well as we could,
 " *already*, [i. e. in the preceeding passage]
 " having produced the authority of *Pble-*
 " *gon*, who relates that these things hap-
 " pened about the time of our Saviour's pas-
 " sion".

Here are many things very remarkable in
 these testimonies of *Origen*. As

1st, *Origen* had the passage of *Pblegon*
 particularly in view, when he wrote his
 notes upon *Matthew*, and he readily admits
 that " no Greek, no Barbarian", none but

ⁱ Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίῳ Καίσαρι ἐκλείψεως, ἣ βασιλεύοντος καὶ
 οἱ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐξαυτῶν εἶναι, καὶ περὶ μεγάλων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς ἀνέγρα-
 ψε καὶ Φλέγον ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ οἰμαι τῶν χρονικῶν. Orig. con.
 Cellum, p. 80.

^u Τυραντίαν εἶναι. ibid. p. 96.

^x Περὶ αὐτῶν, κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω ἀπελογησάμεθα, πα-
 ραδείκνυνται τὸν Φλέγοντα, ἰσορροπῶντα κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τῆς πάσης τῆς
 Σωτηρίας ταῦτα ἀπρητηκῆναι. ibid. p. 96.

Christians ever mention this fact. Could he possibly admit this, when *Pblegon's* name was mentioned in the very objection he was to undertake to answer? Could he avoid saying, that *Pblegon* had mentioned this darkness, and this earthquake, though he had not indeed said that it happened *at the full moon*? Had he only said thus much, he had fully answered the objection which the Infidels had raised; but his admitting the objection and not returning the only proper reply, (had he thought it a proper one) is a plain indication that at that time he did not think it to his purpose. 'Tis certain he was willing to give the best answer *he could* to this difficulty; and therefore he says, that “^y he would use all the abilities that God “ had given him” to answer this objection. Now no answer could be given, but either to produce an authority such as was required; or else to shew, that these miracles being *peculiar* to *Judæa*, Heathen writers might know nothing of them. This latter method was what *Origen* took, and he asserts that there was ^z “ *no earthquake* but in *Jerusa-*

^y In quantum mihi ex Deo est virtus. Orig. in Matt. κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν. Orig. c. Celsum.

^z Nec enim extra Judæam petra dirupta sunt — nec alia terra

" *Jerusalem*, or perhaps in *Judæa*, no darkness but at *Jerusalem*, or at most in *Judæa*". This solution of the difficulty is in flat contradiction to *Pblegon*, who (if he speaks of the same time) might have been produced on the other side of the question as a confutation of *Origen's* solution, had the ^a *wise men of this world* been disposed to argue this point. For

2dly, *Origen* is very express, that those signs which happened at the passion were all peculiar to *Jerusalem*, or at most extended no further than *Judæa*. "Nor was there any earthquake, says he, but what was at *Jerusalem*, for we have no account that any felt it elsewhere, --- ^b which had they felt it, no doubt we should meet with it in some *History*, especially amongst those who have wrote in their *Chronicles* an account of extraordinary events". Did not *Pblegon* write that very sort of *Histories* here mentioned? And did not he men-

terra tremuit tunc nisi terra Jerusalem.—Sic et Tenebræ factæ sunt—intellige super omnem terram Judæam sunt factæ, aut certe super Jerusalem tantum. in Matt.

^a Sapientes hujus Sæculi. Orig. ibid.

^b Quod si factum fuisset, sine dubio inveniretur in historiis aliquibus eorum qui in Chronicis scripserunt nova aliqua facta. ibid.

tion eclipses, and earthquakes, and particularly one in *Bithynia*? Which way could *Origen* possibly say what he said, when he had *Phlegon* before him, had he imagined his testimony to have been to his purpose? The truth is, *Origen* knew that *Phlegon's* authority could not be proved to relate to our Saviour's passion, and therefore he very fairly gave up his testimony in this place.

If it be said that he mentions his authority in his books against *Celsus*, 'tis true. But in what manner does he do it? Is it like one that was convinced of its pertinence? He says first, "*Phlegon* mentioned an eclipse and great earthquakes in *Tiberius's* reign, during which *Jesus* was crucified". Then sixteen pages afterwards, he adds, "that he had vindicated the credibility of the accounts of the earthquake, and darkness as well as ever he was able, vouching *Phlegon*, who said these things happened about the time of our Saviour's passion". 'Tis true, that upon *Origen's* notions of the time when our Saviour died, *Phlegon's* eclipse and earthquake did happen *that very year*. But *Origen* could not say, nor does he say, that *Phlegon* expressly spoke of the *same darkness and same earthquake*, which was at the time of

of Christ's death. *Phlegon* said no such thing; but *Origen* here against *Celsus* strove to make the best of a thing, which when he considered and treated of at large, in another place, he fully gives up. And after all, how does he here make the best of *Phlegon's* testimony? Why, he expresses himself in the very *loosest* manner possible: first, referring back to a place where he had in reality said nothing to the point; And then he cites him as telling of what "happened ABOUT the time of Christ's death"? Not asserting that it was AT That time; nor pretending any such thing. Can any stress be laid on such indeterminate expressions thus cautiously guarded? But

3dly, I observe that the *enemies of Christianity* were the persons who produced *Phlegon* as mentioning a famous eclipse in *Tiberius's* reign, and likewise other remarkable events, in his *Chronicles*. How come *these men* to mention it as a circumstance, that " *Phlegon* took no notice of its being "at full moon"? It looks as if they had seen *Africanus's* account, who vouches

* Et *Phlegon* quidem in *Chronicis* suis scripsit, in principatu *Tiberii* *Cæsaris* factum, sed non significavit in luna plena hoc factum. *Origen*. in *Matt*.

Pblegon's testimony for saying that this eclipse was ^d *at the full moon*. *Origen* was pressed here ; and instead of asserting *Pblegon's* testimony to be to his purpose, though that circumstance was not in *Pblegon*, he accounts for the darkness at the passion by “ ^e means of very thick clouds which obstructed the rays of the sun”. Here therefore is an evident instance that *Origen* could not possibly think *Pblegon* spoke of the darkness at the passion, since *Pblegon* says, ^f that *the stars appeared in the heavens* during his eclipse ; whereas *Origen* says, the clouds were so thick that the Rays of the sun itself were obstructed by them.

4thly, 'Tis now very proper to observe that *Africanus* says, ^g “ The darkness was *all over the world* ; the rocks were rent by an earthquake ; and many places in *Judæa*, and in other parts of the earth were thrown down”. *Origen*, who was his friend and acquaintance, and was as learned a man as ever the christian world

^d Ἐν πανσελήνῃ -- γεγονέναι. *Africanus*.

^e Tenebrosissimas nubes ad cooperiendos radios solis. *Orig. ibid.*

^f ὥς τε καὶ ἀστέρας ἐν ἡρανὶ φαῖναι. *Pblegon*.

^g Καθόλου τὸ κόσμος σκοτῶ ἐπίγυτο. - Σεισμῷ δὲ αἱ πέτραι διεσπάρηντο, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ τῆς ΛΟΙΠΗΣ γῆς κατεπίφθοντο. *Africanus*.

had then produced, not only *denies* all this, but argues about it in such a manner as shews that he knew nothing of such universal effects. He declares that “ there was “ no darkness but at *Jerusalem*, or at most “ in *Judæa*”. Nay, he expresses himself stronger, “ ^h There were *no rocks rent out of “ Judæa, nor any earthquake any where “ but at Jerusalem*”. *Africanus* quotes *Phlegon* for saying ^{hh} that “ there was a total eclipse of the sun *at the full moon*”. In *Origen*, ’tis particularly urged as an argument against the darkness which christians talked of, that ⁱ though *Phlegon* speaks of an eclipse that happened in “ *Tiberius’s* “ time, yet he does not say that it was *at the full moon*”. Whether *Africanus* or the wise men in *Origen* are to be depended on, in such a contradictory account as this is, must be left to every one’s breast: Only thus much must be owned, that the passage it self being extant, we are sure that in *Africanus* a clause

^h Nec enim extra Judæam petreæ disruptæ sunt — nec alia terra tremuit tunc nisi terra Hierusalem. Orig. ibid.

^{hh} Φλέγων ἱστορεῖ, — ἐν παντελήνῃ ἡλείῳ γεγονέναι τελεῖαν. *Africanus*.

ⁱ Et *Phlegon* quidem in *Chronicis* suis scripsit in principatu *Tiberii Cæsaris* factum; sed non significavit in luna plena hoc factum. Orig. in *Mass*.

is added which is not now extant, nor ever appears to have been in *Phlegon*.

One would be apt to wonder what it was that could tempt *Africanus* to say so positively, that *Phlegon* testified, that the *eclipse of the sun was total at the full moon*; when it could only be looking into *Phlegon* to see that there was no such thing. This was exposing the best good cause in the world to the "ii" *ridicule*, or to the *contempt* of all that were its enemies, and "would rather occasion a stubborn infidelity, than gain any proselytes to christianity". But so it was in those days of primitive zeal, and want of exactness in critique: there is too much reason to complain of great carelessness, or pious fraud, in making authors speak what they never said nor thought of. But 'tis more to be wondered at that learned Moderns should take up with so little appearance of truth; or labour to maintain what has so little probability to support it.

The learned *Huetius*, when the objection from *Origen* was before him --- *that Phlegon did not intimate that this eclipse happened*

" In risum sapientium hujus sæculi, & magis infidelitatem in hominibus sapientibus operetur quam fidem. Orig. *ibid*.

at the FULL MOON--- remarks, ^k “*That neither did Phlegon mention it as done at the new moon*”. The difference of the cases is surely very great. For all eclipses of the sun can happen at no other time than at the *new moon*: and therefore if a preternatural eclipse were to happen, 'tis the very thing that is remarkable, that it happened out of the ordinary course of nature, at a time when a regular eclipse could not happen. If the mention of *any* eclipse is worth the notice of any one, a *solar* eclipse at a *full moon* must be doubly so: and that historian, who should remark an eclipse, and not set down *such* a circumstance of it, would do much worse, than if he took no notice at all of the eclipse; because he would then represent such a fact as natural, and by that means impose on his Reader one fact for another. But to return to *Origen*.

When the objection was made to him, that no body had ever mentioned this darkness, and earthquake, except christians, and *Phlegon* was plainly given up by him; or at

^k Neque interlunio factum id annotavit: quare rem in medio reliquit. Huet. Dem. Evang. Propos. 3. § 9.

most he is cited in such a manner, as if *Origen* were conscious that he could not defend himself by his testimony; 'tis somewhat surprising that he should take no notice of the famous *acts of Pilate* to which *Justin Martyr*, and *Tertullian* have appealed, and which are so much insisted on by later writers. Could there be stronger and more full evidence than these *acts of Pilate*, either to the miracles of Christ, or to this *eclipse* in particular? Or would those who objected to *Origen*, that none but *Christians* mention this darkness, have acknowledged with *Tertullian*, ¹ that "*Pilate* was in his conscience a *Christian*?" It may be worth our while therefore a little to consider whether there were any such *acts of Pilate* in *Origen's* time.

Justin Martyr, speaking concerning the crucifixion of our Lord in his 2^d *Apology*, says, ^m "After they had crucified him, those that did it, cast lots for his garments, and divided them amongst themselves.

¹ Et ipse pro sua conscientia Christianus. Tertull. Apol. c. 21.

^m Μετὰ τὸ σταυρῶσαι αὐτὸν, ἔβαλον κλῆρον ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐμερίσαντο ἑαυτοῖς, οἱ σταυρώσαντες αὐτὸν. Καὶ ταῦτα ὅτι γέγονε δύνασθε μαθεῖν ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίᾳ Πιλάτῃ γινομένων Ἀκτῶν. Justin Mart. 2 Apol. p. 76.

" And

“ And that these things were done, you
 “ may learn from the *acts* done under *Pon-*
 “ *tius Pilate*”. Afterwards he says; “ That
 “ it was prophesied that Christ should cure
 “ all diseases and raise the dead, hear what
 “ is said. ’Tis thus: at his coming the
 “ lame shall leap like a stag, and the tongue
 “ of the stammerers shall be eloquent;
 “ blind men shall receive their sight, le-
 “ pers shall be cleansed, and dead men shall
 “ be raised and walk. ” And that he did
 “ these things you may learn from what
 “ was done by him under *Pontius Pilate*”.
 Some very good Criticks have here changed
 αὐτῷ into ἀκτῶν. i. e. “ you may learn from
 “ the acts done under Pontius Pilate”. But
 read it either way it makes no great mat-
 ter: For *Justin Martyr* does not say that
Pilate wrote or *sent* any account of these
 matters to *Tiberius*; and consequently the
 testimony of *Pilate* cannot from hence be
 urged.

But then *Tertullian* is more precise. He
 tells us ° “ That *Pilate* acquainted *Tiberius*

° Ὅτι τε ταῦτα ἐποίησεν, ὅτι τῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίῳ Πιλάτῳ γενομένων
 αὐτῷ μαθεῖν δύνασθαι. *ibid.* p. 84.

° Ea omnia super Christo Pilatus — Cæsari tunc Tiberio nun-
 tiavit. *Tertul.* *Apol.* c. 21.

“ with what happened to our Saviour”, and speaks as if the account of the *darkness* at our Saviour’s passion was one of those facts which the *Romans* were by this means well apprized of. P “ At the very “ same instant, at mid-day, day-light was “ withdrawn : they thought this darkness “ at noon to proceed from an *eclipse*, who “ did not know that that also was foretold “ concerning Christ : the reason of it not “ being understood, they denied it : and yet “ you have this strange accident told in “ your *secret accounts* of things”. *Rigaltius* for, *in arcanis*, reads *in archivis*. I suppose *Tertullian* means that those who knew nothing of *Amos’s* Prophecy, c. viii. 9, *I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day*,----- these have thought this *darkness at noon* [not] to proceed from an eclipse ; whereas it was really and truly an eclipse : and not conceiving nor imagining the possibility or reason of such an eclipse, they have denied that darkness to proceed from any such cause.

P Eodem momento dies medium orbem signante sole subducta est. Deliquium utique putaverunt, qui id quoque super Christo prædicatum non scierunt : ratione non deprehensa, negaverunt : et tamen eum mundi casum relatum in arcanis vestris habetis. *ibid.*

This

This I guess to be *Tertullian's* meaning: and that it ought to be read, *deliquium utique* [non] *putaverunt*: and then the sense is very clear, which otherwise I think is not intelligible.

'Tis not at all improbable, what *Eusebius* has observed, *Ecc. Hist.* l. 2. c. 2. that 'twas an antient custom for the governours of provinces to transmit to their principals whatever was new, that they might not be in the dark as to such matters: and 'tis possible that *Pilate* might give an account to *Tiberius* of the death of Christ. But that he wrote the things which *Tertullian* says he wrote; or that the things for which *Justin Martyr* appeals to the *acts of Pilate*, were ever sent to *Tiberius*, has no foundation of probability. *Tertullian's* account is that ^a *Pilate* acquainted *Tiberius* with all
 “ these

^a Hunc Judæi detractum et sepulchro conditum, magna etiam militaris custodiæ diligentia circumfoderunt, ne quia prædixerat tertia die resurrecturum se a morte, discipuli furto amoliti cadaver fallerent suspectos. Sed ecce die tertia concussa repente terra, et mole revoluta quæ obstruxerat sepulchrum, & custodia pavore disjecta, nullis apparentibus discipulis, nihil in sepulchro repertum est præterquam exuviæ sepulchri. Nihilominus primores — surreptum a discipulis jactitaverunt. Nam nec ille se in vulgus eduxit, ne impii errore liberarentur, & ut fides non mediocri præmio destinata, difficultate constaret. Cum discipulis autem quibusdam apud Galilæam — ad xl dies egit — dehinc ordinatis eis ad officium prædicandi per orbem, circum-

“ these facts, The *darkness*; the *burial* of
 “ *Jesus*; the *watch* set, lest, since he had
 “ foretold that he should rise again the third
 “ day, his *disciples* should steal away the body;
 “ that there was an earthquake on the third
 “ day; that the stone which covered the se-
 “ pulchre was removed; that the watch was
 “ frightened; that no *disciples* were at the
 “ grave; that nothing was found in the se-
 “ pulchre but the burying clothes; that the
 “ chiefs of the *Jews* give out that he was
 “ stolen by the *disciples*; that *Jesus* did not
 “ appear openly lest the wicked should be freed
 “ from their mistake; and that faith, to which
 “ great rewards were promised, should have
 “ some difficulties to struggle with; that *Jesus*
 “ with his *Disciples* spent 40 days in *Galilee*;
 “ and then, they being ordained to preach
 “ through the world, he was taken from
 “ them in a cloud into Heaven, much
 “ more truly than *Proculus* asserted this of
 “ *Romulus*. ALL these things, *Pilate*, in
 “ his conscience a *Christian*, acquainted *Ti-*
 “ *berius* with.”

circumfusa nube in cœlum est ereptus, multo melius quam
 apud vos asseverare de *Romulis Proculi* solent. EA OMNIA
 super *Christo Pilatus*, & ipse jam pro sua conscientia *Christia-*
nus, *Cæsari* tunc *Tiberio* nuntiavit. *Tertul. Apol. c. 21.*

Add

Add now to this account of *Tertullian* the things for which *Justin Martyr* likewise appeals to the *acts of Pilate*, and then we have the miracles of *Jesus* in his life, and all the circumstances of his death fairly and justly related by *Heathens*. Is this like *Pilate's* conduct in the Gospels? Could *Pilate* possibly say some of the things which *Tertullian* puts upon him? Could he tell *Tiberius*, the reason here given, why *Jesus* did not appear to all the *Jews* after his Resurrection? or could he say that he was *much more truly taken into heaven, than ever Romulus was*, and yet continue an infidel? Or would *Pilate* mention such a circumstance ⁹⁹ as the soldiers *casting lots for the garments* of our Lord, for which *Justin* appeals to these *acts*? That indeed is a material circumstance to a christian, but to an infidel 'tis nothing. It seems therefore much the most natural to suppose that these *acts of Pilate* came out of the same mint, which some other early forgeries did; and were mistaken by these good men, and quoted as genuine, just as they did some

⁹⁹ Μετὰ τὸ σταυρῶσαι αὐτὸν ἔβαλον κλῆρον ἐπὶ τὸν ἱμάτισμον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐμερίσαντο αὐτοῖς. Just. Mart. 2^{da} Apolog. p. 76.

other

other things which seemed to make so strongly for their cause.

Besides how came *Tertullian* to know what was contained in these *secret accounts*? Or if he and *Justin Martyr* knew of these *acts*, how comes it that they should escape so diligent a person as *Eusebius*? for 'tis evident he knew nothing of them but what he learnt from *Tertullian*. Nor did *Origen* know of any such *acts* as *Pilate's acts*, nor of his *epistle* to *Tiberius*; for if he had, he could not but have produced them as his vouchers when 'twas objected to him, that *none but Christians* had ever mentioned this extraordinary eclipse. Who would not at any rate have purchased such a valuable testimony to Christ? But the truth is, These early *acts* of *Pilate* seem plainly to be forged. Who were the authors of them I know not: afterwards the Heathens forged another sett of them, which *Eusebius* mentions; and later Christians have forged a third, and probably a fourth sett of them, which are now extant.

One thing more must be remarked before I quit *Origen* and *Tertullian*, viz. That since

* In arcanis vestris.

they

they both agree that Christ preached but *one year*; and *Tertullian* says that he died in the 15th of *Tiberius*; if *Pblegon's* eclipse happened at that time of the year that Christ died, it must have happened in the fourth year of the 201st Olympiad about *April 18th*; whereas that very year in the *November* following, or in the 1st year of the 202^d Olympiad, i. e. about seven months after in the same *Julian* year a real total eclipse did happen.

Hitherto we may observe that the testimony of *Pblegon* is cited, but his words themselves are never produced, either by *Africanus* or *Origen*. But about a hundred years after them lived *Eusebius* the famous Church-Historian, and he having reduced things to a methodical chronology, has so cited *Pblegon's* words, and placed them in such a manner, as to fix them to a certain year, viz. the 4th of the 202^d Olympiad, whereas all before him, or all but one, had declared that our Saviour preached but *one year*, and consequently died three or four years before this. However as my design is to give a brief history of this passage, I shall set it down as *Eusebius* has fixed it. In his *Chronicon* it stands thus:

F

“ Olymp.

“ Olymp. 202. Tiberii 15. Christi 30.

2. 16. 31.

3. 17. 32.

4. 18. 33.

“ Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord,
 “ according to the prophecies concerning
 “ him went to his passion in the 19th year
 “ of the reign of *Tiberius*” (it should be
 the 18th) “ ABOUT which time we find

“ Ἰησοῦς ὁ χριστός, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς περὶ αὐτοῦ
 προφητείας ἐπὶ τὸ πάθος προῆι, ἔτις ἐστὶ τῆς Τιβερίου βασιλείας καθ’
 ὃν καιρὸν καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις μὲν Ἑλληνικοῖς ὑποσημασιν ὑπομνηματίζονται
 κατὰ λέξιν ταῦτα. “ Οὗτος ἐξέλιπε. Βιθυνία ἐγένετο Νικαίας
 “ τὰ πολλὰ ἱστορεῖν. Α καὶ συνάδει τοῖς περὶ τὸ πάθος τῷ Σατῆρ
 ἡμῶν συμβεβηκασί. Γραφεὶ δὲ καὶ λέγει [Syncecellus habet λεγόν,
 lege Φλέγον] ὅτι τὰς Ολυμπιάδας — [Supple e Syncecello συνάγων]
 περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ ὅγῳ ῥήμασιν αὐτοῖς τάδε.

“ Τῷ Δ’ ἔτει τῆς σβ’ ολυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἑκλειψὶς ἡλίου μεγίστη
 “ τῶν ἐγνωσμένων πρότερον καὶ νύξ ἦν σ’ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥστε
 “ καὶ ἀστέραι ἐν ὕμῳ φανῆναι, σεισμός τι μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν γι-
 “ νομένη [delet hanc vocem Syncecellus] τὰ πολλὰ Νικαίας κα-
 “ τίστρέψατο. Καὶ ταῦτα [μὲν Syncecellus] ὁ δηλωθεὶς ἀνὴρ.”

Τεκμήριον δ’ ἂν γένοιτο τὸ κατὰ τὸ δεῖ τοῦ ἔτους πεποιθέναι τὸν Σα-
 τῆρα, ἢ τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγελίου μαρτυρία, ἥτις μετὰ τὸ π’ ἐ-
 τ’ Τιβερίου τριτῇ χρόνῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ διαγενέσθαι μαρτυρεῖ.
 Κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐν χρόνῳ Ἰωσήφ’ ἱστορεῖ ἐν ἡρώδῃ Πιπτακοῦς,
 πωήσις καὶ πτόπῃ ἱερὰς ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι πρῶτον, ἔπειτα Φαῖς
 ἀθροῖας ἐνδοθεὶς ἀκῶσαι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ ἱερῷ αὐτοῖς ῥήμασιν ἐπέσκει,
 METABAINΩΜΕΝ ΕΝΤΕΥΘΕΝ. Καὶ ἄλλοι [ἄλλοι δὲ τὶ Syn-
 cellus] ὁ αὐτὸς ἀναγράφει Ἰωσήφ’, ὡς Πιλάτος τὸ ἡγμένον
 κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον Καίσαρ’ τὰς εἰκόνας νύκτωρ εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν, ὥστε
 ἐκ τῆς θύρας ἀναβέντ’, μεγίστη τι [delet illud τι Syncecellus] θορύβῳ
 καὶ στάσις ἀρχὴν ἐμβεβληκίῳ τοῖς [delet τοῖς Syncecellus] Ἰουδαίοις.
 Ἐξὼν ἐπιστήκει, ποσὶν τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἐν’ ἀνδράσιν συμφορὰν. Eusebius
 Canon Chronicus.

“ these

“ these things related expressly in other
 “ *Greek Histories*. There was an eclipse of
 “ the sun ; an earthquake in *Bithynia* ; a great
 “ deal of the city of *Nice* was thrown down
 “ by it : which things *exactly agree* with
 “ what happened at our Saviour’s passion.
 “ The writer of the *Olympiads* writes and
 “ speaks of the same things in his 13th book,
 “ in these very words.

“ *In the 4th year of the 202^d Olympiad there*
 “ *was the greatest eclipse of the sun that*
 “ *ever was known : and ’twas [as dark as]*
 “ *night at the sixth hour, so that the stars*
 “ *were seen in heaven. A great earthquake*
 “ *in Bithynia threw down a great part of*
 “ *Nice.* Thus far the person aforesaid. The
 “ testimony of *St. John’s Gospel* is clear,
 “ that our Lord suffered this very year, since
 “ he assures us that he spent three years
 “ in teaching, after the 15th of *Tiberius*.
 “ ABOUT the same time *Josephus* tells us,
 “ that on the day of Pentecost the Priests
 “ first perceived a motion and noise : after-
 “ wards they heard a frequent voice speak-
 “ ing from the inmost part of the Temple
 “ these very words, LET US DEPART
 “ HENCE. And elsewhere the same *Jo-*
 “ *sephus* writes, that *Pilate* being governour,

“ ABOUT the same time placed the Images
 “ of *Cæsar* in the night-time on the Temple;
 “ which it was not lawful to do; and this
 “ gave rise to a very great tumult and se-
 “ dition among the *Jews*. Hence you may
 “ learn what calamities have successively
 “ happened to the *Jewish* nation”.

Thus far *Eusebius*, who has produced *Pblegon's* words, and has given us an opportunity of examining them more minutely, by the circumstances which he has joined to them. 'Tis very remarkable, 1st, that *Eusebius*, notwithstanding he has cited *Pblegon* so particularly, yet he takes no notice of *Origen's* remarks, who is clear that there was “ no such things as rocks rent, or any
 “ darkness, any where else except in *Ju-
 “ dea*”. Nor does *Eusebius* take any notice of what *Origen* had observed, that no mention is made of these things by any *Grecian* writer. *Origen* had *Pblegon* before him as well as *Eusebius*; and knew what was in *Pblegon* as well as *Eusebius* did; and yet *Origen* could not find any *Greek* (or o-

* Nemo Græcorum. Orig. in Matt.

Ἕλλησι τοῖς ἐπομνηνάσιν. Euseb.

Quod si factum fuisset sine dubio inveniretur in historiis aliquibus eorum qui in Chronicis scripserunt nova aliqua facta. *Origen*.

ther) *Records* that mentioned the things which happened at our Saviour's death, except what were mentioned by Christians.

2. *Eusebius* introduces this passage of *Phlegon* in such a manner, as would make one suspect that he was at best *dubious* himself whether it related to the point in hand. Perhaps *Africanus*, of whom he speaks very well in his *Ecclesiastical History*, l. i. c. 6. and again, l. 6. c. 31. might mislead him. However that be, *Eusebius* introduces the place of *Phlegon* thus, just as *Origen* did when he strove to make the best of his testimony, "--- ABOUT [not at] WHICH TIME, we find, such and such things to have happened: and then he instances in things which happened several years both *before* and *after* the year he is speaking of, and heaps them all together in one and the same year, in which if they had happened it would indeed have been remarkable. But as the *other* things, mentioned by *Eusebius* as happening *this* year, all of them happened demonstrably in *other* years, therefore neither can you be certain that *Phlegon's* eclipse

Καὶ ὁ καὶ καὶ. Euseb. Κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τῷ πάδης. Orig. c. Celf.

happened this year merely because *Eusebius* has cited it under this year.

E. g. *Eusebius* says, ^x "ABOUT the same times at the feast of *Pentecost* a voice was heard from the inmost part of the temple saying, LET US DEPART HENCE". Who would not hence imagine that at the *Pentecost* immediately after our Saviour's passion, or at that very *Pentecost* when the Holy Ghost descended in so remarkable a manner on the Apostles, *Acts* ii. this voice was heard? So again, when under the same year he says, ^y "ABOUT the same time *Pilate* set up *Cæsar's* images on the temple". Who would not imagine that this fact too happened within the year in which 'tis cited? And yet we know from *Josephus*, that *neither* of these facts did happen in the 4th year of the 202^d Olympiad. So likewise when *Phlegon's* testimony is cited as it is, and produced in the same manner of expression, -- ^z ABOUT which time, -- you cannot infer, that the eclipse he is speaking of, happened in this year, more than you can, that what *Josephus* is cited for hap-

^x Κατὰ τῆς αὐτῆς δὲ χρόνῳ Ἰωάννου ἱεροῦ. *Eusebius*.

^y Κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον. *ibid*.

^z Καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ. *ibid*.

pened in this year. Had *Eusebius* been as clear in himself, as he is supposed to be, he would certainly have expressed himself in a different manner.

It may be said perhaps, that *Pblegon* is not here spoken of, when he says, " ABOUT
" which time we find these things verba-
" tim in *other Greek or Heathen Writings*;" but that he appeals to some different persons, whose books are now lost, in whom were the words he quotes.

But then as neither the Heathens who objected to *Origen*, nor *Origen* in his reply to them, knew any thing of any such *Greek Writings*, *Eusebius* ought to have mentioned expressly, who, and what those *other Greek, or Heathen, writings* were. 'Tis true that *Eusebius's* words seem to intimate some other writers besides *Pblegon*, that mention the things he speaks of: But we know not who they were, nor in what *year* they say the sun was eclipsed, or the earthquake was at *Bithynia*, nor any circumstance that will prove that these things happened in the year that Christ died. *Eusebius*, by his manner of quoting, has destroyed this evidence, *if ever it were any*; and as he names only *Pblegon*, it must rest upon his sole authority.

3. But 'tis not from the mere words of *Eusebius*, but from the chronological marks of *Phlegon* himself, that this eclipse is fixed to this year, viz. ^a In the 4th year of the 202^d Olympiad, &c. And were we sure that this was the true reading of *Phlegon*, there could be no dispute. But since *Eusebius* and *Jerom* cite it--- In the 4th year; -- and others cite it, as we shall see hereafter, -- in the 2^d year -- and *Africanus* and *Origen* necessarily read it -- in the 4th year of the 201st Olymp. or in the 1st year of the 202^d, or else they could not have cited it at all; it must be uncertain what the true reading is. Had we nothing but this passage of *Eusebius*, and *Jerome's* version of it left, it might have been more easy to have determined the point. But as *Africanus* and *Origen* cite it as if it were in the 4th year of the 201st, or in the first year of the 202^d Olympiad; *Philoponus* -- in the 2^d year -- *Jerom* places it in the 3^d year, notwithstanding he translates it as *Eusebius* had it -- in the 4th year; and considering at the same time the circumstances with which *Eusebius* has cited it, 'tis not enough to determine the matter, to say that *Eusebius* places it in such a year, or read it in such a manner.

^a τὸ δ' ἔτι

St. Jerom, who is so near a translator of *Eusebius* that 'tis almost needless to give a version of him to the reader, has actually fixed the passage of *Phlegon* to the 3^d year of the 202^d Olympiad, at the same time that he gives us the words, *Quarto anno*, in the 4th year. His chronology stands thus :

° Olymp. 201. 4. Tiberii 15. Chr. 29.

202. 1.	16.	30. Jesus Christ works
2.	17.	31. the miracles which
		are mentioned in
		the Scriptures.

3.	18.	32.
----	-----	-----

“ Jesus Christ, according to the prophecies
 “ which had spoken of him, suffered in the 18th
 “ year of *Tiberius*. At which time also we find
 “ expressly

° Olymp. 201. 4. Tiberii 15. Christi 29.

202. 1.	16.	30. Jesus Christus mi-
2.	17.	31. racula quæ in
		evangelis scripta
		sunt facit.

3.	18.	32.
----	-----	-----

Jesus Christus secundum Prophetias quæ de eo fuerant prolocutæ, ad passionem venit Anno Tiberii 18^o quo tempore etiam in aliis Ethnicorum commentariis hæc ad verbum scripta reperimus: solis facta defectio: Bithynia terræ motu concussa, & in urbe Nicæa ædes plurimæ corruerunt. Quæ omnia his congruunt quæ in passione salvatoris acciderant. Scribit vero super his & Phlego, qui Olympiadarum egregius supputator est, in 13^o libro ita dicens. *Quarto autem anno 202æ olympiadis magna & excellens inter omnes quæ ante eam acciderant defectio solis facta: dies hora sexta in tenebrosam noctem versus, ut stellæ in cælo visa sunt, terræque motus in Bithynia Nicæa urbis multas ades subverterit.* Hæc supra dictus vir.

“ expressly these things in other writings
 “ of the Heathens: there was an eclipse
 “ of the sun; an earthquake shook all *Bi-*
 “ *thynia*; and many houses in the city of
 “ *Nice* were thrown down by it. All which
 “ things exactly agree with what happened
 “ at the passion of our Saviour. *Phlegon*
 “ also, who gives us an excellent account of
 “ the Olympiads, writes of these things in
 “ his 13th book, saying thus. *BUT in*
 “ *the 4th year of the 202^d Olympiad, there was*
 “ *a great, and one of the most remarkable*
 “ *eclipses of the sun that ever had happened.*
 “ *The day was turned into dark night at the*
 “ *sixth hour, so that the stars were seen in the*
 “ *heavens; and an earthquake in Bithynia*
 “ *shook down many houses in the city Nice.*
 “ These things the aforesaid author.

Argumentum autem hujus rei quod salvator isto anno passus
 sit, Evangelium præbet Johannis: in quo scribitur, post 15
 annum Tiberii tribus annis dominum prædicasse. Josephus
 etiam vernaculus Judæorum scriptor circa hæc tempora die
 pentecostes sacerdotes primum commotiones locorum et quos-
 dam sonitus sensisse testatur: deinde ex adyto templi repenti-
 nam subito erupisse vocem dicentium, TRANSMIGREMUS
 EX HIS SEDIBUS. Scribit autem supradictus vir quod eodem
 anno Pilatus præses secreto noctis imagines Cæsaris in templo
 statuerit. Hæc prima seditionis & turbarum Judæis causa
 extitit.

Olym. 202æ. 4. Tiberii 19. Christi 33.

“ The

" The Gospel of St. *John* gives us proof
 " sufficient that our Saviour died *that* year;
 " for 'tis said therein that the Lord preach-
 " ed *three* years after the 15th of *Tiberius*.
 " *Josephus* also, a *Jewish* writer testifies, that
 " *about these times* on the day of *Pentecost*,
 " the priests at first perceived some places
 " shake, and certain noises: afterwards
 " out of the inmost part of the Temple
 " on a sudden they heard a voice saying,
 " LET US BE GONE FROM THESE SEATS."
 The aforesaid author likewise writes, " that
 " *in the same year Pilate* the governour, in
 " the dead of night set up the images of
 " *Cæsar* in the temple. This was the first
 " cause of sedition and tumults among the
 " *Jews*.

" Olymp. 202. 4. Tiberii 19. Christi 33."

Now 'tis remarkable here, that though *Je-*
rom's account is designed as a mere transla-
 tion of *Eusebius*, yet what *Eusebius* spoke
 with great caution, and with some artful
 latitude, *Jerom* has made fixt and determi-
 nate. He would not say as *Jerom* does ---
 " A T which time " -- But -- " ^d A B O U T

^e Quo tempore.

^d Καθ' ὃν καιρόν.

“ which time”: The one expression when considered in it self, not confining it to a year, the other absolutely fixing it to it.

But what is principally observable is, that our Saviour was baptized according to *Jerom*, in the 4th year of the 201st Olympiad, in the 15th of *Tiberius*, in the 29th of *Christ*. The 15th of *Tiberius* began *August* the 19th A. P. L. 4742. And the 202^d Olympiad was celebrated, as *Calvisius* has computed it, *August* the 15th that same year. There is then but a very little difference betwixt the beginning of the Olympiadic year, and this year of *Tiberius*'s reign. Now says *Jerom*, “ The Gospel of St. *John* tells us, “ that our Saviour preached three years after the 15th of *Tiberius*”; and then sets down the year of the passion, so as to correspond to the 3^d year of the 202^d Olympiad. In another place he says, that “ * he “ preached three years and sixth months” Now if this be right, it follows that according to *Jerom*'s own Chronology, the eclipse mentioned by *Phlegon* was not in the 4th but in the 3^d year of the 202^d Olympiad; and accordingly he

* Tribus annis & sex mensibus juxta evangelistam Joannem evangelium prædicavit. Com. in Dan. c. 9.

sets it down as a fact that happened in the 3^d year, not in the 4th.

'Tis easy to see how little accurate both *Eusebius* and *Jerom* were in their chronology, when both of them could quote *Josephus* for the story he tells of the voices heard in the temple "ABOUT THESE TIMES." Whereas 'tis evident, allowing the fact to be true, that this story of the voices being heard, could not happen in less than *thirty two* years *after* these times, as appears by the characteristics of the times mentioned by *Josephus*. 'Tis certain that *Jerom* thought these voices to have been heard at the *Pentecost* in that year in which our Saviour died. For not only in this place, but elsewhere he cites *Josephus's* story as happening "at that time in which our Lord was crucified". Now if such men could quote an author for these things under the year in which our Lord suffered,--- This will shew either monstrous carelessness, or else that they cited such facts under such years as they wished or desired might have happened in them.

^e Κατὰ αὐτὸς δὲ τὸς χρόνος. Eub.

Circa hæc Tempora. Hieron.

^f V. Comment. in Matt. c. 27. in Esai. c. 53. & Question. 8^{va}. Hedibiz.

So again in the other instance---^g “ *The same year Pilate set up the Images of Cæsar*”. If he means, that *Pilate* set up those Images the *same year* in which the voices were said to be heard in the temple, this is a mistake of at least 36 years. If he means that this was done the *same year* that our Saviour was crucified, then he mistakes no less than 4 years: For *Pilate* did this as soon as he came to be governour of *Judæa*, which was 4 years before the death of Christ.

But to pass over these things; that which must strike every one at first view is, How comes *Jerom* to cite *Pblegon's* words under the 3^d year of the 202^d Olympiad, at the same time that he reads them,--^h “ in the 4th year ”? If the eclipse was in the 4th year, it was not in the 3^d, and consequently could not belong to the year of the passion of our Saviour which *Jerom* here fixes to the *third*, at the same time that he cites it absurdly and inconsistently *the 4th year*.

As this passage was applied in this manner by *Eusebius* and by *St. Jerom*, when we descend a little lower we shall find it expressly fixed by

^g Eodem anno.

^h Quarto autem anno.

Joannes Philoponus to the *second* year of the 202^d Olympiad. His words are these: ⁱ "*Pblegon* has mentioned this darkness, or rather night, in his Olympiads: For he says, that in the *second* year of the 202^d Olympiad there was the greatest eclipse of the sun that ever was known, and it became dark at the sixth hour of the day, so as that the stars appeared in the heavens". Which now of all these years, the *First*, the *Second*, the *Third*, or the *Fourth*, or whether any of them be the true year that *Pblegon* took notice of, is to be determined by other circumstances. Could it be proved that *Pblegon's* eclipse was the same as the *darkness* which happened at our Saviour's passion, then the true reading of *Pblegon* might be determined by those chronological characters which determine the year of our Saviour's death. But if he means a true *natural eclipse*, as the words obviously signify, and there is no evidence to the contrary but that it may be so, then

Ἰτέτε τῷ σκότεις, μᾶλλον δὲ τῆς νυκτὸς ταύτης καὶ φλέγων ἐν ταῖς, Ολυμπιάσιν ἐμνήσθη· λέγει γὰρ τῷ δευτέρῳ ἔτει τῆς διακοσιοῦς δευτέρας Ολυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἡλιεῖς ἐκλειψις μεγίστη τῶν [ἐκ] ἐγνωσμένων πρότερον καὶ νύξ ὥρα ἕκτη τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥστε καὶ ἀστέραις ἐν ἑρανὶ φανῆναι. *Philoponus de Creatione mundi.*

we are to determine the true reading by calculation; and we ought to see if there really did happen any remarkable, *i. e.* any total eclipse during the 202^d Olympiad.

Philoponus indeed has attempted to prove that *Phlegon* meant by his *eclipse of the sun*, the very same darkness which the Evangelists speak of. His arguments are these.

1st, He says, * “such a kind of eclipse
“ was never known in former times: for
“ the usual eclipses of the sun happen only
“ at the conjunction of the two lumina-
“ ries; but this at the death of our Lord
“ was at the full moon”. His second rea-
son is, ¹ “In other eclipses of the sun, though
“ the eclipse be total, yet it continues dark
“ but a little time; and then the sun be-
“ gins to shine as it gets more and more
“ clear of the moon. But in that at the
“ death of our Lord, the air continued to-
“ tally dark from the sixth to the ninth

* Μη ἐγνωῶται τὴν τοιαύτην ἔκλειψιν τοῖς πρότερον χρόνοις-- αἱ γὰρ συνήθεις τῇ ἡλίῳ ἐκλείψεις ἐν μόνῃ συνόδῳ τῶν δύο φωστῆρων γίνονται. ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ θανάτου χριστοῦ ἐν πανσελήνῳ γέγονεν. *Philopon.*

¹ Ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν τῇ ἡλίῳ ἐκλείψεων ἐν ᾗ ὅλῃ ἐκλείπει ἡλὸς ἀκα-
ριῶμον χρόνον μίρῳ ἀφάντι μείνας, ἐνθάδε ἄνω καθαίρεται ἀρχεται.
Ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ θανάτῳ χριστοῦ ἀπὸ ἑκτῆς ὥρας ἕως ἑνάτης ἀφηνεγῆς ὁ
αὐρ ἔμεινε παντελῶς. *ibid.*

“ hour.”

"hour." Both these are founded upon a supposition, that *Phlegon* said, that ^m *such a kind* of eclipse had never been known before; which *Phlegon* never said. *Philoponus* takes the advantage of *Phlegon's* saying, that 'twas the *greatest* that ever was known, (by which he meant no more than its being total) and thence he infers that there never was ^{mm} *such a kind* of eclipse; and then he goes on to draw such consequences as will not follow from *Phlegon*, but only from his own mistake about *Phlegon's* words.

There is one writer more amongst the antients that has particularly treated of this eclipse; who though he does not mention *Phlegon*, yet I cannot but lay before the reader what he says: I mean *Dionysius the Areopagite*. It signifies but little to enquire when he lived, or to enter into a controversy which exercised the greatest and learnedest criticks and chronologers of the last century. ⁿ *Dallæus* brings him as low as the beginning of the sixth century, *i. e.*

^m Τοιαύτην ἔκλειψεν. *Philoponus*.

^{mm} Τοιαύτην ἔκλειψεν. *ibid.*

ⁿ V. *Dallæum* de scriptis quæ sub *Dionysii Areopagitæ* & *Ignatii Antiocheni* nominibus circumferuntur.

within 60 years of *Philoponus*. Bishop *Pearson* ° makes him a writer within the times of *Eusebius* of *Cæsarea*, i. e. to have lived before the year 340, when *Eusebius* died. Dr. *Cave* ^p professes himself near in the same sentiments with Bishop *Pearson*, and fixes upon the year 362 to place the *Areopagite* in.

DIONYSIUS then tells us, “ that himself
“ and *Apollophanes* ^r were in the city *Helio-*
“ *polis*, which is in *Egypt*, at the time of
“ the passion of our Saviour. And there
“ being then a preternatural eclipse of the
“ sun, it not being the time of the conjun-
“ ction of the sun and moon, *Apollophanes*
“ cried out, to the blessed *Dionysius*, O
“ good *Dionysius* *this portends a change of*
“ *divine things*”. It so happened, that *A-*
pollophanes who saw this wonderful eclipse,
and prognosticated what it portended, yet
continued in his infidelity, and abused *Dio-*

° Postremis Eusebii temporibus scripsisse mea fert sententia.
Pearson. *Vindiciæ*. p. i. c. 10.

^p Huic ego proxime accedo, & circa hæc tempora vixisse
autumo. *Cave*. *Hist. Lit.*

^r Ἀμφω ἦσαν ἐν Ἡλιούπολει τῇ ἐν Ἀιγύπτῳ. Καὶ δὴ τῆς ἡλιακῆς
ἐκλείψεως ἡ κατὰ φύσιν γεγεννημένης, ἡ γὰρ ἦν συνόδος καιρὸς, ἔστιν
λέγεται πρὸς τὸν μακάριον Διονύσιον τὸν σοφιστὴν Ἀπολλοφάνην ταῦτα,
Ὡ καλὲ Διονύσιε, ἀμοιβὰς θεῶν πραγμάτων. *Suidas* in V. Διονύ-
σιου.

nyfius for his becoming a Christian. Upon this *Dionysius* wrote to *Polycarp* the famous Bishop of *Smyrna*, (so this impostor tells the story) a vindication of himself, and says among other things, * “ Both of us were
 “ then at *Heliopolis*, and standing together,
 “ to our great surprize we saw the moon go-
 “ ing under the sun, for ’twas not the time
 “ of their conjunction. Again we saw it
 “ from the *ninth hour* quite to the even-
 “ ing preternaturally to stand diametrically
 “ under the sun. Put him likewise in mind
 “ of this; for he knows that we saw the
 “ beginning of the moon’s entrance under
 “ the sun from the east, and its progress
 “ quite to the verge of the sun’s disc, and
 “ and then its regress: and again we saw
 “ that the sun was not first dark and then
 “ received light on the *same side*, but di-
 “ rectly the contrary.” i. e. They saw the
 moon go out of its natural place, and pro-

* Αμφοτέρω γὰρ τότε κατὰ Ἡλιόπολιν ἄμα παρόντε καὶ συνεισότη παραδόξως τὸ ἥλιον τὴν σιληνὴν ἐμπίπτουσαν ἰωράμεν· ὃ γὰρ ἦν συνόδου καιρὸς. Αὐθις τε αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἑννατῆς ὥρας ἀχρι τῆς ἰσπέρας εἰς τὸ τῷ ἥλιῳ διάμετρον ὑπερφυῶς ἀντικαταστάσαν. Ἀνάμνησον δὲ καὶ τι καὶ ἕτερον αὐτόν. Ὅιδε γὰρ ὅτι καὶ τὴν ἐμπύκνωσιν αὐτὴν ἐξ ἀνατολῶν ἰσπράττειν ἀρχαμένην, καὶ μέχρι τῷ ἡλιακῷ πέρας ἐλθῶσαν, ἔτα ἀναποδίσασαν καὶ αὐθις ἔκ ἐκ τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἐμπύκνωσιν, καὶ τὴν ἀνακάθαρσιν, ἀλλ’ ἐκ τῷ κατὰ διάμετρον ἐναντίῳ γεγενημένη. Suidas.

ceed under the sun, and after it had continued in this posture from the *ninth hour* 'till evening, it went back again into its own place; so that the sun beginning to be dark on its *eastern* side, when the time of its eclipse was over, it began to be light on its *western* side first, the moon retiring *eastward* again. "These were the things which at that time" (so the *blessed Dionysius* says) "happened preternaturally, and which were only possible to be done by Christ alone, the cause of all things, who doth great and wonderful things, of which there is no number. If you dare, or if you can, O *Apollophanes*, confute these things to my face, who was then with you, and saw them with you, and examined them with you, and wondered at them with you."

Thus have we this eclipse made a complication of miracles, which I will give the reader in the margin, in the words of a very eminent divine, *Franciscus Lucas Bru-*

¹ Τεταῦτα τῷ τότε καιρῷ τὰ ὑπερφύη καὶ μόνω χριστῷ τῷ παννι-
τῇ δυνατῷ, τῷ ποιῶντι μεγάλα καὶ ἑξαισία, ὃν οὐκ ἔστιν ἀριθμὸς.
Ταῦτα εἰ σοὶ δεμιτὸν ἰστέ καὶ δυνατὸν Ἀπολλόφανες, ἐξέλεγες καὶ πρὸς
ἐμὲ τὸν τότε συμπρόντα σοὶ, καὶ συναρμόστα, καὶ συνανακρινάστα
πάντα, καὶ συναγαγμένον. Suidas.

gensis,

genesis, who has very carefully enumerated them, in his *Commentary upon Matt. c. xxvii. v. 45.*^u

But how absurd soever this romance is, as here 'tis told, yet one thing is remarkable, that

^u Porro hic multiplex est observandum miraculum. Unum, quod cum Eclipsis solis non soleat fieri nisi tempore novilunii, id est, conjunctionis solis et lunæ; hæc facta sit tempore plenilunii, id est, oppositionis solis & lunæ. — Cum ergo luna solem longe transisset, adeoque dimidiâ ab eo cœli parte distaret; contra proprium motum, quo festus ab occidente in orientem, retrocessit ad solem, eiq; se supposuit, & conjunxit; quemadmodum *Isaia 38. v. 8.* petente Ezechia rege sol decem gradibus contrario cursu recurrit. Hinc sequitur ALTERUM miraculum, quod cum in Eclipsi naturali, luna solem subingredi consueverit ab eâ parte quæ respicit occidentem, tamq; primum obscurare, atque ita transire solis corpus ad oppositam usque partem; ut proprius ejus morus velocior est proprio solis motu — in hac subingressa sit a parte orientis. Fuit TERTIUM miraculum, quod cum corpus solis, quâ parte primum fuerit tectum, eadem primum soleat: retegri ac nudari; hic, pars ea quæ ad orientem, primo tecta, postremo nudata, ac luci reddita fuerit. Nam, quod pro QUARTO miraculo annotatur, luna cum ad solaris corporis finem pervenisset, quâ viâ venerat, rediit ad principium solaris corporis, & inde ad orientem, vespere soli occidenti opposita in oriente, eo loco ad quem pervenisset, si naturali motu incessisset: quæ fuit restitutio cœlestium corporum in statum pristinum. Liceat QUINTUM addere miraculum, quod orbis lunæ, qui, qua parte mortales aspiciebat, totus eo tempore erat illustratus: subito totus ea parte fit obscuratus, ita ut non magis luna, quam sol eo tempore luxerit. Lunæ enim suppositæ soli, accenditur superior, obscuratur inferior orbis. Sic igitur accidit solis obscuratio, interpositione lunæ admirandâ cum primis, & naturæ ordinem viresque excedente. Sed quia luna, ut longè à sole distat, tamen eodem signo soli jungatur, ita etiam sole ac terrâ est minor; tenebræ autem istæ occuparunt universam terram, quod docent Evangelistæ: non sufficit lunæ interpositio ad obscurandum solem, sed necessaria insuper fuit radorum solarium retentio, de quâ D. Hieronymus — Nam sola luna cœcume-

that the eclipse is made to begin at the *ninth* hour, or at nine a-clock in the morning. Had the *Areopagite* observed the *Athenian* rules of computing their time, he must have reckoned his hours from sun-set, * for the *Athenians* began their day at the setting of the sun, and reckoned from sun-set to sun-set. His *ninth hour* therefore could not be the time of the Evangelist's darkness upon any scheme, viz. from 12 a-clock to 3 in the afternoon. But he reckoning his days as the *Ægyptians* (where the scene is laid) and the *Romans* did their civil day, and as we do ours * from mid-night to mid-night, 'tis very remarkable, that he says he saw the moon diametrically under the sun at *nine a-clock*; the very time in which *Pblegon's* real eclipse, as we shall see hereafter, was at its heighth.

œcumenicam solis Eclipsin efficere non potest. Lucem ergo retinuit Deus solis, natura luciflui, ne diffunderetur in terram, eâ copîâ quâ consueverat.—Sole igitur, partim per lunæ interpositionem, partim per radiorum retractionem, obscurato, factæ sunt tenebræ. Lucas Brugenſis Com. in Matt. c. xxii. v. 45.

* Athenienses [diem statuunt] ab occasu solis ad occasum. Cæterum Romani a media nocte ad mediam noctem diem esse existimaverunt. Censorinus de die Natali, c. 23.

Hitherto

Hitherto then we have shewn, that *Africanus* quotes *Phlegon*, but with such a circumstance of his asserting an eclipse *at the full moon*, as is certainly false. *Origen*, where he treats at large of this matter, denies all *Africanus's* assertions, and maintains that the darkness and earthquake which was at our Saviour's death was not universal: was not any where but at *Jerusalem*, or in *Judea* at furthest: Nay, he allows that *no Greek, no Barbarian* whatever, had ever mentioned this eclipse, even when *Phlegon* was mentioned, and lay before him, as making part of the objection he undertook to answer: that these two authors, as indeed in general the primitive fathers, ^{xx} the *Larger--Ignatius* excepted, thought that our Saviour preached but *one year*, and consequently *died* the 4th year of the 201st Olympiad: and then if *Phlegon's* eclipse was at the same time that Christ died, that likewise must have been in the fourth year of the 201st Olympiad: or if it be said only to have been in the same year that Christ died, then that will take in part of the first year of the 202^d

^{xx} Ἐπισὶ ἀναγνῶντος ἀποστόλου. Ignat. ad Trallianos. Τριττὸν χρόνον. Euseb.

Qu. How came the A. of these epistles by a notion not spoken of till the *fourth* century?

Olympiad.

Olympiad. *Philoponus* cites *Pblegon* as saying it was in the *second* year of the 202^d Olympiad; *Jerom* places it in the *third* year, though at the same time he gives the words, *in the fourth year*; and *Eusebius* quotes the words and fixes them to the *fourth* year of this Olympiad. Lastly, *Dionysius* tells us, (not indeed that *Pblegon* says his eclipse was at *nine* in the morning;) but that in fact at our Saviour's passion the sun was totally eclipsed at *nine* in the morning. As there are no other evidences that I know of, except these which have been produced, I conclude, that no one can be positive what is the true reading of *Pblegon*; nor can any one assert from the authority of *Eusebius* alone that *Pblegon's* words were, *In the fourth year*, since others are as determinate for *other* years as he, or his translator, can be for *That*. I shall therefore next consider

In the *second* place, whether *Pblegon* did not mean by his words a *real natural* eclipse. And here, 1st, supposing that we did not first imagine these words to relate to the darkness at our Saviour's passion, we should make no scruple of understanding them of a true, natural, total eclipse. *Pblegon's* words expressly mention, or hint at,
nothing

nothing but an *eclipse of the sun*; nothing preternatural or extraordinary: now had he designed a preternatural eclipse of the sun at the time of *full moon*, 'tis scarce possible for him not to have taken notice of it; nay 'twould have been the only thing which deserved a particular notice. On the contrary he takes no notice of so remarkable an event: He mentions no particular *time of the year*, nor do any of his words lead us to any thing extraordinary, done any where, except what was done by the earthquake at *Nice* in *Bitbynia*.

2dly, If the darkness at our Saviour's passion was not over *all the universe*, but was peculiar to *Judæa*, and the *earthquake* likewise was confined to *Jerusalem*, or at most to *Judæa*, as *Origen* fully proves; then *Pblegon's* mentioning the effects of an earthquake several hundred miles off of *Judæa*, plainly shews, that he speaks of a *different earthquake*, and a *different eclipse* from that darkness and earthquake, that was peculiar to *Judæa*. Had these events been *universal*, how comes it to pass that he takes no notice of such extraordinary effect *all over the world*? Or how could he fail saying, as *Africanus* did, that many parts of *Judæa*,

I and

and other parts of the world, were shook down? Why should he mention *Nice* alone, and never hint at a more general effect? But

3dly, No instance, I believe, can be produced of a similar manner of expression, (unless it be amongst Christian writers speaking of this particular darkness) viz. “That in such a year there was *as great* “an eclipse of the sun *as ever was known*”,--to signify only, that in such a year there was as great a *darkness* as ever was known, when there was *no eclipse* of the sun at all. Do any writers call a *darkness extraordinary*, an *eclipse of the sun*? Or do they ever speak absolutely of an *eclipse of the sun*, and mean by those words not an *eclipse* but something else? e. g. when *Philo* was speaking of the *Ægyptian darkness*, he says ^γ, “It being clear day, on a sudden there arose “a darkness; perhaps there was an eclipse “of the sun greater than ordinary, and per- “haps by means of thick contiguous clouds,

^γ Λαμπρῶς γὰρ ἡμέρας ἔσσης, ἑξαπνῶως ἀναχέϊται σκότος, ἵσως μὲν καὶ ἡλίου γενόμενης ἐκλείψεως τῶν οὐ ἔστι τελειότατος ἵσως δὲ καὶ συνεχεαῖς νεφῶν καὶ πυκνότησιν ἀδιαστάτοις καὶ πιλήσει βαιοτάτη τῆς τῶν ἀκτίνων φορῆς ἀνακοπείσης, ὥς ἀδιαφορεῖν ἡμέραν νυκτός. Philo. Vit. Mos. l. 1.

“ and

“ and by a violent compression of them
 “ the passage of the rays of light was hin-
 “ dered; so that that day did not differ
 “ from night.” He does not use the words,
 an *eclipse of the sun*, to signify any thing
 but a true and proper eclipse, or the in-
 terposition of the moon betwixt the sun and
 earth; as is plain from his saying, τῶν
 ἘΝΘΕΙ τελειότερας, *greater than ordina-*
ry: and though he supposes this might have
 happened at the same time, yet he prin-
 cipally imputes the darkness he was speak-
 ing of to the other cause. He does not
 suppose this eclipse to be not an eclipse,
 but that a real eclipse happened and
 concurred with the other miraculous ef-
 fects. So in the case before us; *Phlegon*,
 speaking of an eclipse of the sun greater
 than ordinary, and expressing himself in the
 manner he does, cannot mean any thing
 else besides a true natural eclipse; nor can
 his words be distorted to any other mean-
 ing. But

4thly, *Phlegon* not only calls his eclipse,
 an *eclipse of the sun*, but he adds likewise
 that *the stars appeared in heaven*. Now had
 he intended any darkness but what arose
 from a *true and proper eclipse*, he could not

have added this circumstance, because whatever obstructed the rays of the sun, would much more obstruct the *light of the stars*. Since therefore he has added *both* these circumstances; that there was *an eclipse of the sun*, and that *the stars* appeared, he must mean a real natural eclipse, and not a darkness arising from any other cause.

There is, I know, an instance produced, as parallel to this, whereby 'tis pretended to justify the calling of a sudden failure of sun-shine, whether ordinary or extraordinary, an eclipse of the sun. 'Tis in *Herodotus*, who tells us that when *Xerxes* marched into Greece ^{yy} " *The sun, ἐκλιπὼν τὴν ἐν τῷ ὐρανῷ*
 " *ἔδρην, leaving its place in heaven disappear-*
 " *ed, not by means of any clouds interpo-*
 " *sing, but the air being very clear, instead*
 " *of day-light it became dark as night.*" But this instance is not at all parallel, even supposing that *Herodotus* did not design to tell of a *real eclipse*. For 'tis very different to say, that there was a *great eclipse of the sun*, making use of a term of art, and to say, that the sun *leaving its place in the*

yy Ἐκλιπὼν τὴν ἐν τῷ ὐρανῷ ἔδρην, ἀφανὴς ἦν, ἔτ' ἐπὶ νεφίων ἑόντων, αἰθρῆς τε τὰ μάλιστα, ἀπὸ ἡμέρας τε νύξ ἐγένετο. Herod. l. 7. c. 37.

heavens disappeared. I do not enter into the controversy about the year of *Xerxes's* march into *Greece*. *Petavius* pretends to demonstrate that there was no *real eclipse* of the sun that will answer the true year of *Xerxes's* march. But *Scaliger* observes that there was in fact an eclipse in the 4th year of the 74th Olympiad on the 19th of *April*; and *Calvisius* thence argues that *Xerxes* marched that year into *Greece*. Which of them is right is foreign to my purpose. *Herodotus's* words equally may express a *stupendous prodigy*, as Bishop *Usher* ^z calls it, or an *eclipse*: But *Phlegon's* words will not. The manner of expression in *Herodotus* is literally applicable to other causes, as well as to an eclipse; *Phlegon's* words are not so: and lastly, when *Herodotus* says it *became dark as night, not through the interposition of clouds*,--Supposing we cannot say what he means, yet the circumstance which *Phlegon* has added, of *the stars being seen* at the time of the eclipse of the sun makes this case so intelligible, that one cannot but understand it of a true natural proper eclipse of the sun.

But was there any real eclipse of the sun, which happened during the 202^d Olympiad

^z Annales, A. M. 3514.

which

which will answer to *Pblegon's* description, and which may determine what was the true reading of his words?

The famous *Kepler* was I think the first that made a question, whether the reading of *Pblegon* was the 4th, or the 3^d, or the 2^d; or whether, since there was such a difference in those that quote him, whether it were not in truth the 1st year of the 202^d Olympiad. His *Eclogæ* are scarce, and therefore I will transcribe what he says.

“ *Jerom* say you, (he writes to *Calvisius*
“ the famous author of the chronology)
“ translates it --- in the 4th year. What if
“ he mistook? For if you carefully confi-
“ der *Jerom's* words ---- B U T in the 4th
“ year --- it will plainly appear that he read,
“ not τῷ Δ' ἔτει, but τῷ δὲ Δ' ἔτει. There is

^a Hieronymus inquis vertit anno quarto. Quid igitur si & ipse est hallucinatus? Nam si ponderes verba Hieronymi, Quarto autem anno, plane constabit ipsum legisse, non τῷ Δ' ἔτει, sed τῷ δὲ Δ' ἔτει. Magna itaq; suspicio est voculam, δὲ, pro numerali perperam sumptam. Aut si Hieronymus addidit unum Δ', pro τῷ δ' ἔτει legens τῷ δὲ Δ' ἔτει, cur non nobis æque liceat unum β addere, pro τῷ δὲ ἔτει legendo τῷ δὲ β ἔτει. Certe Hieronymus cum passione uno anno longius abit a Quarto Olympiadis retrorsum quam Græcus Eusebius. Et per se absurdum est, vel hunc vel illum adducturum fuisse Eclipsim ad signandam passionem, si eam vel secundo vel tertio, illam vero Eclipsim quarto Olympiadis anno factam rigide statuissent. Ex quo vim æstima phrasis κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν. *Kepler Eclogæ Chroniæ*, p. 87.

“ therefore

“ therefore great room for suspicion, that
 “ the particle Δε, *but*, was mistaken for a
 “ numeral letter. Or if *Jerom* added one
 “ Δ for τῷ Δ' ἔτει reading τῷ δὲ δ' ἔτει, why
 “ may not we add a β, and for τῷ δὲ ἔτει
 “ read τῷ δὲ β' ἔτει. 'Tis certain that *Jerom*
 “ carries the passion a year higher than the
 “ *Greek* text of *Eusebius* does; and 'tis ab-
 “ surd in it self for either the one or the
 “ other of them to produce this eclipse to
 “ mark the time of the passion, if they
 “ place the passion under the 2^d or the 3^d
 “ year, and fix the *fourth* year of the
 “ Olympiad for the eclipse. From hence
 “ you may judge of the meaning of the
 “ phrase,---καθ' ὃν καιρὸν--- ABOUT which
 “ time.”

In the margin *Kepler* has put this ^b N. B.
 “ In the year of the 202^d Olympiad, *i. e.* in
 “ that year in which the 202^d Olympiad
 “ was celebrated upon the 9th day of *July*;
 “ on the 25th of the *November* following
 “ about noon, or two hours before noon,
 “ there was an eclipse almost total in

^b N. B. Τῷ δ' ἔτει τῆς σβ' Ὀλυμπιάδος; hoc est anno illo quo
 Olympias ccii est acta mense Julio, 9^{no} die; 25^{to} Novembris
 sequentis circa meridiem, seu, 2 hor. ante, Eclipsus fere totalis
 in Asia, indice calculo Astronomico. ibid.

“ *Asia*,

" *Asia*, as appears by astronomical calculation".

As this perhaps is not so clear as one could wish, *Kepler* resumes this subject in the following part of the same book, and speaks out much more distinctly : " *Jerom*, " says he, translates it thus.--- In the 4th " year of the 202^d Olympiad there was a " great, and very remarkable eclipse above " all others. But then the same *Jerom* has " cited these words under the 2^d year of " that Olympiad, if you reckon its begin- " ning from the day on which the Olym- " pic games were celebrated. And *Euse-* " *bius* from whom *Jerom* has translated this " has heaped together under the same year " events of very different times. Add to

^c Hieronymus vertit—Quarto Anno Olym. CCII magnam Eelipsin & præ aliis excellentem. At idem Hieronymus adscripsit ista verba ad annum 2^{dum} illius Olympiadis, a die ludicri Olympici incœptæ. Et Eusebius ex quo ista vertit Hieronymus eodem anno diversissimorum temporum eventa coacervavit. Adde quod græcus Eusebii textus ambiguus est & lubricus. Nescias enim Quarto anno, an simpliciter, Anno vero Olym. CCII legas: annon unam litteram β vel γ omissam suspiceris: ut legendum sit, secundo anno a die Olympiorum, vel tertio a Cal. Jan. antecedentibus Olympia annum auspicando. Et si legas, ipso illo anno Olym. CCII, ut est quidem in Græco textu, τῷ δὲ ἔτῳ τῷ consentientem invenies astronomiam. Anno enim 74^o Juliano, quo Olympias acta est, fuit 24 Novembris, hora una atque altera ante meridiem Eclipsis solis in Asia vel Syria totalis. Ita Græcum textum Phlegontis, Astronomia, hoc est rerum natura tuctur. *Kepler*. *Eclogæ*, p 126.

" this

“ this, that the *Greek* text of *Eusebius* is
 “ very ambiguous and uncertain. For you
 “ can’t tell whether you ought to read it---
 “ *in the 4th year* ---- or--- But *in the year*
 “ of the 202^d Olympiad : nor whether you
 “ may not reasonably suspect a 2 or a 3 to
 “ be omitted; so as that it may be read--in
 “ the 2^d year from the day on which the
 “ Olympic games were celebrated, or on the
 “ 3^d year, beginning the year from the first of
 “ *January* before the Olympic games. If you
 “ read it, *In the year of the 202^d Olympiad*, as
 “ it is in the *Greek* τῷ δ’ ἔτει, you will find
 “ astronomy confirming it : For in the 74th
 “ *Julian* year in which this Olympiad began,
 “ on the 24th of *November*, an hour or two
 “ before noon, there was a total eclipse of
 “ the sun in *Asia* or *Syria*. Thus does
 “ astronomy, i. e. the nature of things, jus-
 “ tify the *Greek* text of *Phlegon*.”

The only thing that is objected against
Kepler’s account of this matter, is, that ’tis
 not consistent with the custom of the *Greek*
 language to say, *In the year* of the 202^d
 Olympiad : that therefore some numeral
 ought necessarily to be put to express the
first year, as well as the subsequent ones.
 But how easy is the solution of this? If

K

Phle-

Pblegon designed the eclipse in the *first* year of the 202^d Olympiad, the *Greek* text of *Eusebius* is to be corrected by the smallest alteration possible in the *Greek* numbers ; by putting an A instead of a Δ ; and then, language, and the nature of things, and, which is very remarkable, all those who first applied the testimony of *Pblegon* to the year of the death of Christ, will all agree.

Mr. *Whiston* indeed has confidently asserted in a late piece of his, ^d that “ he had
“ taken the pains to calculate by his *Co-*
“ *pernicus* all the natural eclipses of the
“ sun that could happen in any year that
“ *Pblegon* could mean ; and that he found
“ no natural eclipse of the sun that could
“ possibly happen so as to suit his descrip-
“ tion, but only that supernatural one at

^d Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. *Sam. Clarke*, p. 148.

N. B. In these *Memoirs* Mr. *W.* being “ greatly displeased
“ with Dr. *Sykes*”, has mentioned four Mistakes in the *Elogium*
of Dr. *Clarke* published by me. The *two* first of which “ *Mis-*
“ *takes*”, are *not* in the *Elogium*, nor one word tending to
what Mr. *Whiston* says. The *Third* is no “ *mistake*” at all : All
that Mr. *W.* charges me with in relation to this is, That I have
celebrated the argument for the unity of God *a priori* ; whereas
Mr. *W.* is fully satisfied with the argument *a posteriori*. This
I never denied, nor spoke one single word about : and yet here
is my 3^d mistake. The 4th “ *Mistake*” is, that truly I said
something which was true, and which Dr. *Clarke*’s friends
knew to be true, but it was “ *News*” to Mr. *W.* How easy
is it, when one is “ greatly displeased ” with any one, to charge
him with imaginary mistakes, with want of “ care, caution,
“ and accuracy”, and to spy faults where there really are none?

“ the

" the passion, which exactly agreed to it." And I believe it to be true in fact, that Mr. *Whiston* had calculated every year, *but the one only true one*, when he published his Book. But when it was told him afterwards by my self, that *Kepler* meant an eclipse that was total in the *first* year of the 202^d Olympiad, and I had shewn him *Kepler's* book, He went to his computations again, and found it to be as *Kepler* said. But that any one that is able and disposed, may examine this matter the easier, I will give the reader Mr. *Whiston's* own calculation, as he computed it when desired by me, for the city *Nice* in *Bitbynia*.

☉ Eclipsed November 24th A. D. 29.

A. D.	1.	6 ^s	24 ^o	9'	42"	☉ Sagit	1	0
+ years	20.	4	13	25	13	☾ Sagit	5	40
+ Nov.	8.	11	11	24	5	diff.	4	40
		3	15	59	16	24 ^d 4 ^h	53'	30"
		2	4	56	16	—Equat.	08	40
							23	20
							13	30
rest		9	25	3	44	+ Diff. merid.		
d.	24	9	22	34	40	Greenwich		
			2	29	4	& Nice	+ 2	10
h.	4		2	1	54		23	22
				27	10		23	23
				26	55		31	30
					15		23	21
						☾ Lat. N.	43'	30
								middle of the general Eclipse.

Just total
Node descend.

K 2

This

“ This eclipse therefore began at Nice
 “ about a quarter after eight in the morn-
 “ ing, and ended about a quarter after ten.
 “ It was about 9 or 10 digits there, and
 “ along the Mediterranean, where the center
 “ past, it was but just total: and was in
 “ the first instead of the fourth of the 202^d
 “ Olympiad ; while neither the year against
 “ which *Phlegon's* testimony stands in the
 “ *Chronicon*, nor *Jerom's* version, *Anno*
 “ *quarto*, will allow it to be so early.” Thus
Mr. Whiston.

The only objection against this natural
 eclipse of the sun that occurs to me at
 present is, that this eclipse will not answer
 to the description, or time of day, which
Phlegon mentions: for as to the other
 things, *Eusebius's Greek* text, *Jerom's* version,
 and the years it is placed against in the
Chronicon, they have been sufficiently con-
 sidered.

Now *Phlegon's* description is “^e that it
 “ was the greatest of any known before.”
 By this he can't be understood to intend,
 that there never was a *total eclipse* known
 before; but as *Jerom* translated it, ^f *It was*

^e Μεγίστη τῶν ἐγνωρισμένων πρότερον. *Phlegon.*

^f Magna & excellens inter omnes. *Hieronymus.*

a great

a great one, and as remarkable as any. And so it was; for it was total, and central along the Mediterranean and in *Syria*. This shews that it was so great, as that *the stars* might appear, and that it might seem as dark as *night*. Or if you take this eclipse as it was in the *Lesser Asia*, where it was not quite total, yet even such eclipses are described as total, and with the circumstance of the stars appearing. E. g. *Pliny, Tacitus, and Xiphiline* mention a remarkable eclipse, during which they tell us, *z the whole sun was eclipsed, so as that the stars appeared.* v. *Euseb. Chron. Neronis 4^{to}. Num. 2074.* ^h *This eclipse, says Scaliger, was no where quite total.* If *Phlegon's* eclipse therefore were no greater than this which *Xiphiline* has mentioned, yet the stars might appear. But *Phlegon's* being really total and central, as *Mr. Wh.* allows, there can be no difficulty in this matter.

It may be said perhaps, that the *time* of *Phlegon's* eclipse so remarkably coincides with the *time* of the darkness mentioned by Evangelists, *viz. 'twas night at the 6th hour*, that from hence it may be imagined rather to relate

^z Ὁ ἥλιος σύμπας ἐξέλειπεν ὥστε καὶ ἀστέρας ἐκφάναι. *Xiphiline.*

^h Hæc eclipsis nuspiam totum solis orbem obscuravit. *Scaliger.* in *Euseb. Chron.*

to the darkness mentioned in the Gospels, which really began at *twelve at noon*, than to a natural eclipse which was at its height by a little after *nine* in the morning.

But in truth, though now we read in *Pblegon*, " 'twas night at the 6th hour", yet, supposing the reading to be right, Why might not *Pblegon* himself mistake two or three hours. However, 'tis very remarkable that *Dionysius* saw this wonderful eclipse *from the ninth hour until evening*. *Dionysius* must use the *Egyptian* computation, the scene being laid in *Egypt*; or if he used the *Roman*, (as impostors seldom are able to keep up a consistent character,) then too his eclipse must be at *nine* in the forenoon; as *Pblegon's* upon calculation really was. Had *Dionysius* used the *Athenian* way of reckoning their civil day, as it might be imagined an *Athenian* would, then his eclipse must have been at *three* in the afternoon, and have lasted till the evening. But in truth the variation of an hour or two is of little weight in these sort of remote antiquities: 'tis well that we are

i 'Απὸ τῆς συνάτης ὥρας ἄχρι Ἑσπέρης. *Dionysius*.

able to find out these truths so near as we can; and we ought not to reject a certainty for so little an inaccuracy as a few hours, when all other circumstances agree so exactly.

Having said thus much concerning *Phegon*, it may perhaps be thought necessary to say something to what is produced from the histories of *China* in relation to this *darkness* which happened at the death of Christ. For if what is reported to be said in the *Chinese* annals be true, we have then a full answer to the objection made by the *wise men of this world* to *Origen*: here is evidence of this darkness not from Christians, but Heathens; and here is a full confutation of the objection infinitely superior to what that Father urged. We are told then by *Adrian Greslon*, in his history of *China*, and from him by *Huetius*; and likewise by Father *Couplet* in *Confucius*; and from all these by a late Jesuit, *Dominique de Colonia*, that * “the *Chinese* in their *fasti* tell us,”
(I use

* Les Chinois,—ont eu grand soin de marquer dans leurs anciens fastes, que sous le regne de leur sage roy *Quam-vu-ri* il y eut dans le mois d’Avril une éclipse de soleil qui fut totale, et qui étonna fort ce prince, parce que, disent-ils, elle arriva contre le cours regulier de la nature, & qu’ elle mit en disordre leurs Astronomes;— et derangea absolument toutes leurs

(I use the words of *Dominique de Colonia*)
 “ that in the reign of their wise King *Quam-*
 “ *vu-ti*, in the month of *April*, there was
 “ a total eclipse of the sun, which sur-
 “ prized that Prince very much, because
 “ (say the *Chinese*) it happened contrary to
 “ the regular course of nature; and that it
 “ puzzled their astronomers, and absolutely
 “ confounded all their observations : The
 “ Epoch they fix for this extraordinary event
 “ answers precisely to the 4th year of the
 “ 202^d Olympiad, and to the 18th of *Ti-*
 “ *berius*.---- This memorable event is ta-
 “ ken notice of in the History of *China* by
 “ *Adrian Greslon*. The Fathers, *Couplet*,
 “ *Intorcetta*, and *Rougemont*, have likewise
 “ mentioned it in their *Confucius*, as has the
 “ famous and learned *Huetius* in his *Demon-*
 “ *stratio Evangelica*.”

’Twill be but little to the purpose to
 take notice of the *improvements* that this

leurs observations ; & l’époque qu’ils donnent à cet événement
 extraordinaire répond précisément à la quatrième année de la
 deux-cens deuxième Olympiade, & à la dix huitième année du
 règne de l’empereur *Tibère*. —

Ce fait memorable se trouve marqué dans l’histoire de la
Chine d’*Hadrien Greslon* : Les Peres *Couplet*, *Intorcetta*, & *Rouge-*
mont en ont aussi parlé dans leur *Confucius*, & il en est aussi
 fait mention dans la *Démonstration Evangelique* de l’illustre &
 sçavant Monsieur *Huet*. *Dominique de Colonia*, *La Religion*
Chretienne autorisée par les Payens. Tom. 1. p. 36, 37.

Author

Author has made to the story: such as, it
 “¹ puzzled their astronomers; it absolutely
 “ confounded all their observations; and it
 “ put into disorder all their tribunal.” For
 all these he has no grounds in his authors.
 Nor is it worth while to correct his little
inaccuracies; such are, that he says “ that
 “ the Fathers *Couplet*, *Intorcetta*, and *Rouge-*
 “ *mont* have spoke of this eclipse in their
 “ *Confucius*”; in this he omits a *fourth* Father
 equally concerned with the *three* he names,
viz. Christian Herdtrich: and then he men-
 tions the *three* he cites as taking notice
 of this eclipse, when the *Chinese chronolo-*
gy annexed to *Confucius* was the single
 work of Father *Couplet* alone. Not then to
 take notice of these sort of things, Father
Couplet in his chronological table of the
Chinese monarchy under the 46th cycle has
 these words,

“ In the 28th year of this cycle, the 7th
 “ year of the reign of Quam-vu-ti, the last
 “ day of the 3^d moon, there was a memorable

¹ Elle mit en disordre leurs astronomes, leurs Tribunaux, et
 derangea absolument toutes leurs observations.

^m Anno Cycli 28, Imperii vero (scil. Quam-vu-ti) 7. Luna 3.
 die ultimo, memorabilis Eclipsis totalis, cujus occasione vetat in
 codicillis imposterum uti nomine Xim, id est, sanctus. Cum
 dicant annales Eclipsim prævenisse tempus, an fuerit ea, quæ
 in morte Christi contigit, Astronomis examinandum relinqui-
 tur. Couplet. *Monarchia Sinica Tabula Chronologica*, p. 78.

L

“ total

" *total eclipse* : On occasion of which he
 " forbad for ever after to use the word
 " *Xim*, i. e. *Holy*, in their Letters Patents.
 " Since their annals say that this eclipse
 " came before its time, 'tis left to *Astrono-*
 " *mers to consider*, whether this was not
 " that which happened at the death of
 " Christ." Now,

1. What is it that F. *Couplet* would have
Astronomers consider, or compute? Can they
 calculate an eclipse that is præternatural?
 By what art, or by what rules must this be
 done? The *Chinese* annals say no more than
 this-- that this total eclipse came *before the*
time, i. e. *before the time that they had calcu-*
lated it for, and it happened on the last day of
the 3^d moon. Now 'tis certain that in the year
 of Christ 32 (which is the year F. *Couplet*
 fixes for this eclipse,) the passover or full
 moon was upon a * *Munday or Tuesday*,
 and consequently that could not be the year
 of Christ's death.

The *Chinese* chronology, as F. *Couplet*
 has fixed it, makes the 32^d year of Christ
 to be the same with that year in which
 the remarkable eclipse in *Quam-vu-ti's* reign

* V. Whiston's Harmony, p. 196. Scaliger. Emendatio
 Temporum, l. 6.

happened. But then this misfortune attends this calculation, that this eclipse happens a full year too soon ; for our Saviour died not in his 32^d year, but in his 33^d.

2. This eclipse happened, says F. Couplet, “ * the last day of the 3^d moon ”. Now the *Chinese* † begin their year with the new moon of March: and consequently the last day of the 3^d moon, in that year must have happened not at the time in which Christ died. For our Saviour dying at the passover in the *first moon*, i. e. when the first moon was a fortnight old, the end of the *Chinese third moon* must necessarily carry us two months and two weeks further in the year than our Saviour's real passion; and consequently this eclipse will not answer the purpose for which 'tis brought. Or if in the 32^d year of Christ, the *Chinese* began their year on the 2^d or 3^d of March, i. e. a month sooner than the *Jews* did, then the *Chinese* 3^d moon will end towards the end of May, six weeks too late for the *Jewish* passover, which this year was kept April 14th, as Scaliger has computed it. But

* Lunæ 3. die ultimo. Couplet.

† Chinenſes principium a Martii Menſis novilunio auſpican-
tur. Iarriſchus Theſaurus rerum Indicarum. Pars. 2. p. 608.

3. This eclipse happening the "last day
 " of the 3^d moon", it is plain it happened
 at the *new moon*, not at the *full moon*, and
 consequently cannot be to the purpose for
 which it is brought. However

4. The real difficulty is still behind ; and
 that is, Was there ever any such eclipse at
 all as this which F. *Couplet* mentions, in
Quam-vu-ti's reign? What evidence is there,
 that there is any ground for asserting such
 " a memorable eclipse on the last day of
 " the 3^d moon", even supposing that the
 32^d year of Christ was the true year of
 his passion, and that this moon coinci-
 ded with the right time of the year?
 'Tis very observable, what Monsieur *Cassini*
 has said, in his remarks added to *Lubere's*
Historical relation of Siam.-- "It is unques-
 " tionable," says he, "that a great part of
 " the eclipses, and of the other conjunctions
 " which the *Chinese* do give us as observed,
 " cannot have happened at the times that
 " they pretend, according to the Calendar
 " regulated after the manner as it is at pre-
 " sent; as we have found by calculation of
 " a great number of these eclipses.--- F.
 " *Couplet* himself doubts of some of these
 " eclipses, by reason of the complement
 " which

“ which the *Cbinese* astronomers made to
 “ one of their Kings, whom they congratu-
 “ lated, for that an eclipse which they
 “ had predicted had not happened: the
 “ heaven they said having spared this mis-
 “ fortune. And this Father has left to
 “ Mr. *Thevenot* a manuscript of the same
 “ eclipses which he has printed in his chro-
 “ nology, entitled *eclipses veræ & falsæ*,
 “ without distinguishing the one from the
 “ other.” *

If this then be true, which there can be no reason to doubt, then it does not appear, whether this eclipse, which *Couplet* here mentions, be not one of those eclipses which he calls *falsæ*: it does not appear that *Couplet* believed, that this very eclipse happened at the time that is pretended: in short no argument can be drawn from the mention of eclipses in his chronology, that the *Cbinese* ever observed such eclipses; or that there really were such; no nor that they were able even to calculate an eclipse, since *some never happened which they predicted*.

The next author, who is cited both by *Huetius* and by *Dominique de Colonia* is Father *Adrian Greslon*, who published the

* *Luberes Historical Relation of Siam*, p. 220.

History of *China* under the government of the *Tartars*; wherein he gives a particular account of what happened in *China* from 1651 to 1669. In this he tells us of a *Chinese*, by name *Yam-quem-siam*, who wrote an answer to an apology for the christian religion which the Fathers had published in *China*.

This * "*dangerous man*", so F. *Magaillans* calls him, ⁿ "pretends, says F. *Grélon*, to "convict the christians of a falsehood in "relation to what they say touching an "eclipse of the sun at the time of the "death of our Lord. He thinks that he "has got an unanswerable argument against "us, because he does, NB. *not find, that* "this eclipse is taken any notice of in the "*History of China*." *Grélon* then goes on thus, ° "But if one should grant him, that "the

* Nouvelle Relation de la Chine. Par, Gabriel de Magaillans. p. 100.

ⁿ Il pretend convaincre les Chrestiens de fausseté, sur ce qu'ils disent touchant l'Eclipse du soleil, au temps de la mort de nôtre seigneur. Il pense avoir une preuve invincible contre nous, parce qu'il ne trouve point que cette Eclipse soit marquée dans l'histoire de la Chine. *Grélon*. Histoire de la Chine l. 2. c. 5.

° Mais quand on lui accorderoit, que les Historiens de la Chine ont marquée exactement toutes les Eclipses qui ont été observées, ne devoit il pas considerer, que si lorsque cette eclipse commença dans la Judée, il estoit environ midy, il falloit que dans la Chine il fust presque cinq hours du soir, et qu'ainsi

“ the Historians of *China* have exactly ta-
 “ ken notice of all the eclipses, which have
 “ been observed, ought he not to consider,
 “ that when this eclipse began in *Judæa*,
 “ it was about noon; it ought therefore in
 “ *China* to be near *five* at night, and con-
 “ sequently at most they could have seen
 “ but the beginning of it. Nay, it was ne-
 “ cessary, in order to see this beginning of
 “ the eclipse, that the sky should be clear;
 “ for if it were at all cloudy (as it might
 “ be) it is not at all surprizing, that, night
 “ coming on, the eclipse should not be
 “ observed in *China* at all”. But

These excuses will not account for the
 difficulty, For, 1. *Pekin* lies in such a de-
 gree of latitude, that in the very beginning
 of *April* the sun sets at near, if not full, 7
 a-clock: and consequently they might have
 seen it during its whole progress. And 2.
 Why is this supposition made of its being
 possibly *cloudy* in *China*, in order to account

qu'ainsi on ne pouvoit au plus y en avoir veu que le com-
 mencement. Il falloit même pour remarquer ce commence-
 ment que le Ciel fust serain. Que si le Ciel estoit couvert,
 comme il le pouvoit estre, il n'est pas estrange, que la nuit
 survenant, l'Eclipse n'ait pas esté observée dans la Chise.

for

for their not seeing this eclipse? Why is not the very *Chinese* book quoted, in which 'tis asserted, that *in fact* this eclipse was observed? Could F. *Grélon* have possibly made such a supposition against a *Chinese* that averred, that he "could not find that this" eclipse was taken any notice of in the history of *China*," if he had had his vouchers by him for the fact? If it were so cloudy that the eclipse was not seen or "observed"; then in effect *Yam-quam-siem's* assertion is yielded to him: and what then must become of the Father's assertion, that their histories do take notice of it? So that the attempt to answer the *Chinese* author by such a supposition, amounts to little less than giving up the point.

F. *Grélon* goes on, and 'tis this that is the remarkable passage; ^p "The missionaries of *China* beg of the *Mathematicians* of
" *Europe*,

^p Les Missionnaires de la Chine prient les Mathématiciens d'Europe de vouloir prendre la peine de vérifier, si l'an 32 de la vie de Notre Seigneur, environ le mois d'Avril, qui respondoit cette année à la troisième lune Chinoise il y eut une Eclipsé de Soleil; & si elle pouvoit arriver naturellement. Ils ont sujet de souhaiter qu'on les éclaircisse sur ce point de doctrine: parce que l'histoire de la Chine marque, qu'il y eut celle année là une Eclipsé de Soleil contre le cours naturel des Astres, et qu'elle fut si extraordinaire que l'Empereur Quam-vu-ti en fut étonnement étonné. Les Chinois ont accoustumé de

" *Europe*, that they would take the pains
 " to examine, whether in the 32^d year
 " of our Lord, about the *month* of
 " *April*, which answered this year to the
 " *third moon* among the *Chinese*, there was
 " any eclipse of the sun, and whether it
 " could happen *naturally*. They have rea-
 " son to *wish* that they would clear up
 " this point of knowledge for them : be-
 " cause the *History of China* remarks, that
 " *there was this year an eclipse of the sun,*
 " *contrary to the natural course of the stars;*
 " and that it was so extraordinary, that the
 " emperor *Quam-vu-ti* was much astonish-
 " ed at it. The *Chinese* are accustomed
 " to give to their Emperors the title of *Ho-*
 " *ly*. e. g. They call the edicts of the em-

de donner a leurs Empereurs le titre de Saint; par exemple,
 ils appellent les Edits de l'Empereur Chim chy, c'est a dire
 Sainte volonté, saint commandement; & quand ils veulent dire
 le jour de la naissance de l'Empereur, ils disent, Chim-Tan,
 c'est a dire *jour de la saint Naissance*. Cet Empereur apres avoir
 veu cette prodigieuse eclipse renonça a ce titre de Saint, & re-
 connut qu'il ne luy estoit pas dû. Si cette Eclipse ne peut
 pas arriver naturellement, ce que nous ne pouvons pas verifier
 icy faute des livres, nous dirions que ce fust l'eclipse qui arriva
 au temps de la passion de nostre Seigneur, & cette responce
 seroit beaucoup plus plausible pour convaincre les Chinois:
 il faudroit suivre le opinion de ceux qui soutiennent que
 N. S. mourut la 32 année de son âge au mois d'Avril Adrien
 Gresson Histoire de la Chine. l. 2. c. 5.

M

" peror

“ peror *Chim-chy*, that is to say, *holy will*,
 “ *holy commandment*; and when they would
 “ speak of the day of the *birth of the em-*
 “ *peror*, they say, *Chim-Tan*, i. e. the *day*
 “ *of the holy birth*. This Emperor after
 “ having *seen this prodigious eclipse* renoun-
 “ ced the title of *Holy*, and acknowledged
 “ that it was not due to him. If this
 “ eclipse could *not happen naturally*, which
 “ we cannot here examine for want of
 “ books, we *should say*, that it was the
 “ eclipse which happened at the time of
 “ the passion of our Lord; and this answer
 “ would be much more *plausible* to con-
 “ vince the *Chinese*. 'Tis necessary to fol-
 “ low the opinion of them who maintain
 “ that our Lord died in the 32^d year of his
 “ age, in the month of *April*.” *Greslon*.
Hist. de la Chine. l. 2. c. 5.

Here are many remarkable circumstances in this relation. As

1. F. Grélon says, “ The Missionaries beg
 “ of the Mathematicians of *Europe*, that
 “ they would examine, whether in the 32^d
 “ year of our Lord, about the month of
 “ *April*, which answered to the third moon
 “ among the *Chinese*, there was any eclipse
 “ of the sun; and whether it could happen

"*naturally*." Now, take it either way; if there was upon computation a *natural* eclipse of the sun at that time, *i. e.* about *April* A. D. 32. such an eclipse could not possibly be to the purpose; because the eclipse at the time of our Saviour's death must have been at the *full moon*, and therefore not natural, nor computable. If there *was* such an eclipse as did happen *preter-naturally*; then all the Mathematicians of *Europe* could not compute it.

2. He adds, The Missionaries "have reason to *wish* that the Mathematicians of *Europe* would clear up this point for 'them'". Suppose they were to find an eclipse this year about the first of *April*, or the last of *March* in the year assigned, *i. e.* at the *new moon*, this could not give us any satisfaction, because 'tis certain that Christ died not in this year, but in the following one. Besides; an eclipse capable of computation, could not answer their *wishes*, nor at all "clear up this point for them"; because such an eclipse would be a *natural* one, contrary to their own account of that which the *Chinese* History takes notice of. For

3. The *History of China* takes notice, that there was in such a year "an eclipse of the sun contrary to the course of the stars". So says F. *Greslon* : But *Yam-quem-siem* denies there was any such. And that there was none is most probable, because F. *Greslon's* pretence is, that truly they could not prove it, for "want of books." This is plainly false, if they had books that mentioned it in *April*, A. D. 32, in *Quam-vu-ti's* reign. Father *Adam* was then at *Pekin* ; and he was a great astronomer : he ^a "had reformed the Calendar of *China*, which was full of faults, in relation to the calculation of eclipses, the equinoxes, and solstices". p. 3. He and F. *Ferdinand Verbieft* understood this matter perfectly well, and could compute eclipses to the utmost nicety, much beyond the partisans of *Yam-quam-siem* ; and triumphed over all opposition by means of their great skill and exactness in this point. Why then should the Fathers send to *Europe* for help, when they had as good

^a Il y avoit eu deux ans auparavant deux autres Peres qui l'avoit ayd  (viz. Pere Adam) reformer le Calendrier de la Chine, lequel estoit plein de faults, touchant le calcul des Eclipses, des Equinoxes, & des Solstices. *Greslon*. l. 1. c. 1.

astronomers for this purpose at *Pekin*?
 ' Father *Verbieft* had minutely calculated
 an eclipse " six months before it happen-
 " ed, and had foretold the day, the hour,
 " the minute, &c. in which it was to hap-
 " pen". Why could not he have com-
 puted a past eclipse in a given year as well
 as any *Mathematicians* in *Europe*?

But he " wanted books". What books?
 Not sure the *New Testament*, which asserts
 a darkness, which the Fathers would have
 to be an eclipse? Not *Chinese Books*, or at
 least a *Book*, which mentions this eclipse in
Quam-vu-ti's reign, or the circumstance of
 his laying aside the title of *Holiness*: for
 that book or books is pretended to be had.
 Was it then *Mathematical Tables*? No;
 for in the tribunal of *Mathematicks* they
 had all these necessities, both in the *Chinese*
 method, and in their own: and they under-
 stood both these methods so well as to
 rectify the *Chinese* method by the *Euro-
 pean* method: and had done so long before

' Le pere Ferdinand Verbieft l'avoit calculé pour luy, (viz.
 pour le P. Adam qui n'estoit pas peu calculer cette eclipse
 a cause de sa Paralytie) & avoit présenté en son nom son cal-
 cul au Lipou (i. e. Tribunal des Rites) six mois avant qu'
 elle arrivast, avec la figure de la mesme eclipse; determinant
 le jour, l'heure, & la minute, &c. Greffon. l. 2. c. 15.

Yam-

Yam-quam-sien wrote against them as Rebels.

They knew too from the pretended *Chinese* account, that this eclipse was "contrary to the course of the stars". Which way then could the *European* Mathematicians help them to an account of what might more *plausibly convince the Chinese*? Nay they say themselves that it was "contrary to the course of the stars", and then desire our Mathematicians to compute whether this eclipse was *regular*, or *not*. Lastly, Why does he say, "that 'tis necessary to follow the opinion of those who maintain that our Saviour died in the 32^d year of his age in the month of *April*"? Is the time of our Saviour's death to be adjusted to an eclipse, and ascertained by That; Or is not the death of Christ to be fixed to the true year in which he died, whatever becomes of the *Chinese* eclipse? The good Father plainly wanted a "plausible argument to convince the *Chinese*"; and is willing to have the death of Christ fixed a year sooner than it really happened, in order to gain Profelytes to Christ. The good *end* was to sanctify the means!

But

But after all, what is it that is pretended to be in these annals? F. *Couplet* cites only thus much, *Anno Cycli 28. Imperii vero 7. Lun. 3. die ultimo, memorabilis eclipsis totalis*: the rest is F. *Couplet's* observation; viz. that their annals take notice that this eclipse *came before the time*, i. e. sooner than they had computed it. And as eclipses were deemed the forerunners of misfortunes to their Kings, so in consequence of that notion, to come sooner than its time, was deemed to *hasten* the calamity. F. *Greslon* who finds, or pretends to find, an eclipse of the sun this year in the *Chinese* annals, does not say as *Couplet* does, that it "*came before its time*"; but, that it was "*contrary to the course of the stars*"; and yet he desires a computation of it. *Couplet* might do right to desire it; *Grélon* ridiculously: and supposing it were computed, and found that there was a total eclipse, the inference which both of them aimed at would not follow, viz. that such a computed eclipse, was that at our Saviour's passion; because our Saviour died not at a *new* but at a *full moon*: and if upon computation no such total eclipse were found, (as 'tis impossible it should,) it could not be inferr'd, that this in the *Chinese* annals

was

was the darkness at Christ's death, because Christ did not die in the year these Fathers have fixed upon; but in the A. P. I. 4746. A. D. 33.

CONCLUSION.

THUS then this case stands. Every writer that cites *Pblegon* after *Africanus*, has cited him as speaking of the darkness which happened at our Saviour's passion; notwithstanding they have fixed upon different years just as their Hypotheses have led them. Now since *Pblegon* was * an "exact man in his account of the Olympiads", 'tis certain that he fixed this eclipse to some one certain year. *Africanus* who first quoted *Pblegon*, and applied what he said to the death of Christ, must necessarily find what *Pblegon* said, in that year which included part of the 4th year of the 201st, and part of the *first* year of the 202^d Olympiad, because *Africanus* fixed the death of Christ to that year. And 'tis not to be imagined, that he should meet with an eclipse in the 4th year of the 202^d Olym-

* Olympiadarum egregius supputator. Hieron.

piad, and then by so gross a mistake, or fraud, cite it as to his purpose, so many years sooner. If it be asked, how *Eusebius*, or *Jerom*, or *Philoponus*, came to cite it so many years later, if it stood in *Pblegon*, where I conceive it stood? I answer; that these men, from the authority of *Africanus*, took for granted, that *Pblegon* had spoke concerning the darkness at the death of Christ; and then, whatever year they fixed for the death of Christ, whether the 2^d, or 3^d, or 4th year of that Olympiad, they quoted *Pblegon's* testimony still as to their purpose: and so they might^r have done, had they supposed our Saviour to have lived as long as ^t *Irenæus* supposed him to live. But this I submit as a mere conjecture to the judgment of the unbiassed reader.

That there was a *real eclipse* in the 1st year of the 202^d Olympiad, i. e. in the year which *Africanus*, &c. supposed Christ to die in, appears by calculation. *Pblegon's* words are express and clear, asserting an *eclipse of the sun*; and express such an effect as a

^t *Irenæus*. l. 2. c. 39.

natural eclipse in a serene day would produce ; but are not applicable to any other kind of extraordinary darkness. His words either relate to a true natural eclipse ; or else, he has used such a manner of expression as never any one used *before* his time ; nor, (except upon occasion of this very darkness, and that too from mistaking *Pblegon*,) has any one writer, I believe, *ever since*. What the *Chinese* annals have said, (if they have said any thing at all,) 'tis evident, does not relate to our purpose ; for as 'tis reported by the Jesuits it was not *in the year* that Christ died ; and 'tis remarkable that the *Chinese* authors expressly deny that any such eclipse at all is found in their Histories. Since then it appears that there was a *total, central,* eclipse in the 1st year of the 202^d Olympiad, and no mention is made of any thing *preternatural, or irregular*, by *Pblegon* ; 'tis but reasonable to conclude, that he intended to take notice of what was *regular* and *natural*, just as all writers take notice of the common or remarkable eclipses. If he is not thus to be understood, his language must be perverted quite, and his words must loose their ordinary constant signi-

signification. As he is allowed to be an *exact* man in his accounts of what happened in each year of each Olympiad; 'tis more reasonable to suppose that *Africanus* cited him right, than that *Eusebius* did so; because 'tis better to suppose an easy mistake arising from an hypothesis, than a downright premeditated fraud. And since *no time of the year*, nor any thing extraordinary, is mentioned by *Phlegon*, 'tis more reasonable to understand him as speaking of a time of the year when a real eclipse did happen; and that *Africanus* being right in the year, mistook only the *time* of the year; than to suppose *Phlegon* to speak of a *time* of the year when no eclipse did or could happen, even supposing that he did speak of the same year, when an eclipse and a preternatural darkness did *both* happen. And lastly since as good evidence, and as *many* vouchers, are to be brought for *Phlegon's* eclipse happening either the fourth year of the 201st or the *first* year of the 202^d Olympiad, as for it's happening the 4th year of the 202^d Olympiad, (such are *Africanus* and *Origen*, against *Eusebius* and *Jerom*;) and since in *fact* there was such an eclipse as *Phlegon* describes in the 1st year; and

and the alteration of the Numerals in
Greek, from an Λ to a Δ ; *i. e.* from
the *first* to the *fourth* is so very small,
that the mistake is very easy: I think that
'tis most probable, if not certain, that *Phle-*
gon mentioned this eclipse in the *first* year
of the 202^d Olympiad; and that *Eusebius* mis-
took in citing it under the *Fourth*.

F I N I S.

